PLAIN-DEALING:

OR,

A full and particular *Examination*

of a late

TREATISE,

Entitled,

Humane Reason.

By *A. M.* a Countrey Gentleman.

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Plain-Dealing:

OR,

A Full and Particular

EXAMINATION

of a late Treatiſe, Entituled

HUMANE REASON.

THis little Pamphlet, called *Humane Reaſon*, brought into my mind that ſaying of the Moraliſt, that *Every thing hath two Handles*. For if it be true of any thing, it is true of this Book.

Leſt therefore it ſhould be taken by the wrong Handle, and ſo prove miſchievous, I have thought fit (becauſe the Author will

rot do it himself) to do him that right to explain the true meaning of his words as near as I can guess it: and if I have done it according to his mind, I expect he should give me thanks for it; but if I have mistaken him, he may thank himself, and may free himself by better explaining his intentions.

His Design (he saith) was to search for a Guide to Happiness, and to communicate the effects of this search to others, if he thought it might be profitable; which it seems he doth think in that he hath published this Tractate.

Before I go further, I will tell this Gentleman a Story, by which he shall see how profitable a Guide he hath found out.

Travelling once where I was a meer stranger, I enquired of a lusty Fellow I happened to meet withall, which was the way to the next Town, who after he had once or twice looked wisely about him, and very considerately scratched his Noddle, told me: I must go by the Esquire his house.

You may imagine (Sir) that I was very well informed in my way by this Answer: and truly (Sir) you must pardon me if I think the most of Men no better informed in the way to happiness by that direction which (after all your consideration) you have found out, and proposed to them.

For all that you have said comes to no more then this, that every one must follow right

Reason

Reason which is his direct way. Now he that doth not beforehand know wherein right Reason doth consist (as most of mankind do not) will be as much to seek in his way notwithstanding your directions, as I was in mine, not knowing whereabouts the Esquire's house was, to which my wise Guide directed me.

I cannot but be of this Gentlemans opinion, that by reason of the intricacies of the way to Happiness to choose the right paths, and then to guide our selves in them, we had great need have a better eye-sight then is left us by the fall of our first Forefather: but how this consideration (after a long and serious debate thereof as this Author professeth, p. 2.) brings no other Guide to him but his own Reason, I must confess I am not able for my life to understand. For I cannot apprehend that reason is a better Guide, but the very same that was left us by the Fall of our first Forefather. I know of no other Guide that was left us after this Fall but *Humane Reason*, wherefore by telling us that we had great need have a better Guide, the Author himself hath refuted his whole Book; for then we have need of a better Guide then *Humane Reason*. Thus Truth will out sometimes in spight of a mans teeth.

For true it is, that our Reason got so great a bruise by that Fall, that to suppose (with this Gentleman) that every man's Reason

should

ſhould take ſuch directions as it ought and may do, and perſue thoſe directions with care and conſtancy; is a ſuppoſition juſt as probable, as to ſuppoſe, that every man living is wiſer then *Solomon*: and a diſcourſe built upon this ſuppoſal (as this I am examining ſeems to be) will amount to no more then this, That if the Sky falls we ſhall catch Larks. So that our Author by not telling us wherein right Reaſon doth conſiſt, ſeems to be as ridiculous a Guide as he that ſhould give a man that is to travel in a very intricate and unbeaten way, of which he knows not one ſtep, no other directions but this, go your right way and you ſhall be ſure to come ſafe to your Journeys end; and as his direction and ſuppoſal are no leſs ridiculous, ſo I wiſh with all my heart they were no more pernicious in their conſequence: but how impracticable they are, and how deſtructive to all Arts, Orders, and Societies, I ſhall endeavour to demonſtrate by plain inſtances.

For if every man muſt make uſe of no other Guide but his own Reaſon (ſuppoſe in caſes that concern his life and eſtate) and muſt take directions onely from himſelf, thoſe two Honourable profeſſions of Law and Phiſick, would be altogether uſeleſs to mankind, and unprofitable to the Profeſſors: but becauſe it is impoſſible that every man ſhould have time, or leiſure, parts, or conveniency to underſtand either

either of these studies so well as they whose business and employment have mainly tended that way all their life time; all wise men think it convenient not to acquiesce wholly in their own judgment in cases of Physick and Law, but to consult the Lawyers and Physicians.

Neither is it sufficient to affright men from taking the Physicians advice, because some possibly have died of the Doctor; nor from consulting the Lawyers, though probably too many have lost their estates by their indirect councels and proceedings.

The same also holds as to Divinity. For if men were as careful of their souls as of their bodies and estates, they would then in all difficult cases of conscience take the advice of Divines, as frequently as they do of the Judge or the Doctor in cases proper to them: Neither would they conclude (with our Author) that because probably too many have been misled by the errours and deceits of others; therefore they must have no other Guides to themselves but their own Reasons.

For there is a good honest old English Proverb, that will secure every wise man from this conclusion, *viz. He that is onely taught by himself hath a Fool to his Master.* We must not surely then be govern'd onely by our own Reasons exclusively taken from all other helps; for this would at once destroy all the chief

Profeſſions of our Nation. We might then burn all our Studies and our Books, and pull down all our Colledges and Inns of Court and Chancery; nay, the Charter-houſe and the Royal Society it ſelf, as well as all Schools of good Learning would be altogether uſeleſs, if without theſe advantages we could ſuppoſe every man wiſe enough to guide himſelf onely by his own Reaſon. Neither could any Laws, Order, or Society be long maintained, was every man reſolved (with this Gentleman) to have no other Guide.

Thus put the caſe in any Society whatever (let it be Charter-houſe it ſelf) if the Maſter ſhould, (as I ſuppoſe his Duty is) take care that the Laws and Orders of the Society ſhould be preſerved, executed and obeyed by every Member of it, ſhould any peeviſh perſon in it refuſe to pay obedience to them upon this pretence, that he is to be guided only by his own Reaſon, I appeal to this Author himſelf whether he would be ſatisfied with this anſwer, or whether he would not (if it lay in his power) turn ſuch a refractory Fellow out of his ſociety unleſs he did conform himſelf to the Orders and Statutes of it? If not it would be impoſſible for him to maintain the Society: if he would expel him, he clearly proves that the Principle on which he ſeems to build his whole Book, is not to be allowed to any perſon that is ſubject to the Laws of any Society.

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If he ſhall ſay that therefore he added thoſe limitations (if it take ſuch directions as it ought and may do, *&c.*) I would fain know in any Society who ſhall be Judge whether or no every Member of it doth rightly limit his Reaſon, ſhall the Perſon himſelf, or the Governour of the Society? If the Perſon himſelf, then the limitations ſignifie nothing, and the Society would ſoon ſignifie as little: if the Governour muſt be ſo far Judge as to puniſh thoſe Actions that are done contrary to the Statutes and Orders of the place, then why ſhould not the Governours of the Church be allowed the ſame power? I cannot ſee any Reaſon at all, unleſs we are arrived at that madneſs to think it indifferent whether the Church be diſſolved or upheld, or whether we have any Religion in our Nation, or none at all.

I would not be one of that number who ſhould diſpute againſt the power and priviledges of *Humane Reaſon*, for no man loves Reaſon better then my ſelf: nor would I aſſert any ſuch Priviledge to exempt men from Laws or from the publick exerciſe of Religion. For I think nothing can be more unreaſonable: and yet I am deceived if I have not proved that this Aſſertion (which is the whole ſum of our Authors Book) is of that nature.

But he hath one killing Argument that (like a two-edged Sword) doth execution both ways, with which he ſtrikes all dead that dare

dare oppoſe him. And this it is, *page* 2.

" They that diſpute moſt againſt Reaſon, do " it becauſe their own Reaſon perſwades " them to that belief, *&c.*

This is juſt ſuch a mortal Argument as the Papiſts uſe, to prove that the Church is the onely Rule of Faith. For (ſay they) whoſo denies this and aſſerts the Scripture to be the Rule of Faith can have no Authority nor Ground for their belief of the Scripture but the Authority of the Church: and therefore we ought to believe as the Church teacheth us, and not as the Scripture.

But the Anſwer is not very hard to be made to the *Romaniſts*. It is true indeed, the reaſon why we believe the four Goſpels and the Epiſtles to be the Writings of thoſe Divinely-inſpired perſons, whoſe Names they bear, muſt be this, becauſe they have been ſo received by the Church in all Ages; and the reaſon why we believe thoſe Miracles were done as they are related in Scripture, muſt be from the conſtant Teſtimony of the Univerſal Church, and from theſe Miracles we are ſure they were written by perſons inſpired by God, and conſequently that they are the Rule by which we are to walk: Thus the Authority of the Church onely leads us to the Scriptures as an infallible Rule, and leaves us there to be guided by them, and not by the Church any further then her Commands are agreeable to the

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Commands of God contained in the Scriptures.

Neither is the Anſwer much different, nor much more difficult to our Authors dead-doing Demonſtration; for though Reaſon muſt direct us to a Rule by which we are to act, yet when we have once found out ſuch a Rule as our Reaſon aſſures us is Infallible, we then ought to govern our ſelves no longer by our bare Reaſon, but by our Reaſon guided by that Rule, and to act thoſe things (not that Reaſon onely doth direct us) but ſuch things, as our Infallible Rule commands us.

So that we ſee Reaſon is ſo far from being our onely Guide, that it directly leads us to the Scriptures and leaves us to be directed by them, by which it confeſſeth that it ſelf ought to be guided.

If the Author ſhall now ſay that I have miſtaken his Notion, and that his intention in this Book was onely to bring Men into their right wits, and make Men conſider the reaſonableneſs of the Religion of the Church of *England*, and conſequently conform themſelves to it; I ſhall ſay no more then this to him, that I wiſh he had made this Deſign more apparent, that our Diſſenters might not have joyn'd in the miſtake of his Book, and have conſtrued it to the countenancing all Diviſions: and that he had not given by the whole contrivance of his

his Book ſo juſt cauſe of this ſcandal to them,

For the Book hath in moſt parts a double face, that (like *Janus* his) looks two directly contrary ways at once; and therefore we may juſtly ſuſpect a double mind and ſome double dealings in the Author: but this I muſt needs ſay for him, that he hath ingeniouſly contrived it; for (like an armed *Amazonian* beauty) it caſts a pleaſing look, and ſeems to ſmile upon every one that looks on it, and yet it bears about it the inſtruments of death.

I onely make this my requeſt to him, if he writes again, that he would ſhew the World more of his honeſty, though leſs of his ingenuity, by ſpeaking plain truth, but not Oracles that may be interpreted to comply with contradictions; and leſt he ſhould miſtake my Deſign, I will deal plainly and tell him what it is, *viz.* to do the duty of an honeſt *Engliſh* Gentleman, and a good Chriſtian, by doing my endeavours (according to my ſmall abilities) to preſerve the Unity of the Church of *England*, into which I was baptized. I ſhall therefore endeavour to free the minds of all impartial Readers from thoſe miſtakes that might ariſe from this Book I am now examining. To which end becauſe ſome may perhaps be drawn into a maze by reading it, (as the Author was in writing it) I ſhall endeavour to ſhew them the way out of it by walking along with them ſtep by ſtep, and ſo letting them

them see the way back again by the same steps as they were at first led into it. And now to my Task.

The Gentleman foreseeing (as well he might) that many Objections would be raised against him, in the first place applies himself to ward them off, *Pag.* 3. & 4.

Object. 1. He thus proposeth, "That many "of the greatest Wits have by following "their own Opinions encreas'd the Catalogue of Heresies. To this he answers, "That these men either followed not their "own Reason but their Wills, or first hood-"winkt their Reason by interest and pre-"judice or passion, *&c.*

All this I easily grant is truth: but now I appeal to this Author himself, whether he doth not believe that the number of those that follow their Wills more then their Reasons, that are blinded with interest, prejudice or passion, that are wanting in qualifications necessary to inform themselves in matters of Religion, or that are capable of being deceived by some one or all of these causes, or else by the weakness of their understanding does far exceed the number of those that are wise, sober and learned? If he must affirm that he doth believe it, why then would he have every man left to be guided by his own Reason? Which is the best way to prevent Heresies, for the Magistrates

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to let their Subjects follow their own wills and passions, &c. (the greatest part of which they must know will thereby be exposed to irreligion and Atheism as well as all kind of heresie and debauchery) or else to restrain them by moderate penalties within the pale and limits of the best and most Christian Church in the world ?

But (saith our Author) it is no great matter for falling into heresies by the weakness of their understanding.

For (saith he *pag.* 4.) " They are neither " hurtful to themselves nor others.

But hold (Sir, I beseech you) I had always thought that wilful ignorance had been so far from excusing a fault that it made it much greater. so that the weakness of the understanding, if it might have been remedied by our industry and humility, will in no wise excuse us for heresie : Nay, I also thought that supposing our ignorance that leads into any crime was invincible, and therefore the sin might not be damnable to us ; yet it might chance to be (as this of heresie especially is) very hurtful, nay damnable to others by leading them into it after our example, for which they could have no excuse but their own folly.

I always therefore thought it a very great duty in a Gentleman to abstain from common and scandalous vices, not onely for fear of his own danger, but for fear of endangering other

ther men, who I know are more led by the examples of the Nobility and Gentry, then by the Precepts of the Clergy though they should ſpeak like Gods, or live like Angels. There being then ſo much danger from hereſies, it behoveth all perſons ſeriouſly to conſider whether their weakneſs of underſtanding (by which they are led into errours, and by which this Gentleman would excuſe all hereſies) does not proceed from their own wills; and whether they are not ignorant, becauſe they will not be better inform'd; For if their errours and weakneſs do proceed from their obſtinate, perverſe, and contumacious reſiſtance of authority, this turns even the leaſt of errours into the moſt damnable and worſt of hereſies. And this I heartily refer to the ſerious conſideration of all thoſe that ſeperate from the Church of *England*, as they tender the publick peace, and welfare of the Nation, or the eternal ſafety of their own or other mens ſouls, that they examine themſelves impartially whether ever they did inform themſelves concerning that which they diſlike in the Church; and if they did not, let them do it ſpeedily, and ſincerely. For otherwiſe they will be guilty of ſpeaking evil of thoſe things which they underſtand not, and of wilful Schiſm and Hereſie.

As for that which our Author ſaith, That 'to relie upon the Church was to add perpe-'tuity and univerſality to our Errours.

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It is nothing at all to us of the Church of *England*; since I am sure the worst of her Enemies cannot accuse her of enjoyning the belief of any Errour. If they can, let them do it, and I will promise them if it cannot be answered fully and satisfactorily to any unprejudiced judgment, I my self will give them publick thanks for their information. If they cannot accuse her of any Errour in all her Doctrine, certainly it must be a piece of the greatest folly (not to say contumacy) to continue in a wilful breach of her Communion.

The Second *Objection* which he endeavours to hit off, is,

"The frailty, uncertainty and disproportion of Divine Truths to our understanding, *&c. pag.* 5, 6.

I shall not quarrel with him as to the main of his Answer to this Objection: but I cannot agree with him in saying as he doth, "That every mans soul hath in it self so much "light as is requisite for our travel towards "Heaven, *Pag.* 5. For this I apprehend to be down-right *Pelagianism*, an Heresie long since condemned by Saint *Augustine*, and the concurring Votes of the whole Church; or if it be not *Pelagianism*, sure I am it is a much worse Heresie, if not the very renouncing of Christianity. What luck the Gentleman had

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to excuſe the Hereſie juſt in the laſt Paragraph, ſince he falls into it himſelf in this! God help the weakneſs of his underſtanding! But perhaps he will tell us that he doth not believe it an Hereſie, notwithſtanding it is condemned by the Church, or contrary to the Chriſtian Religion. But Sir, what would you ſay if it be condemned by *Humane Reaſon?* Surely then you will confeſs it an Hereſie. Therefore that you may be convinced, be pleaſed to look back but three Pages, and you will find it directly contradictory to what that Book tells us, *Pag.* 2. *l.* 14. That "to guide him in the right way "one had great need of a better Guide then "that which was left us by the Fall of our "firſt Forefather. But what need (I pray you Sir) is there? when you your ſelf tell us, "That every mans Soul hath in it ſelf ſo much "light as is requiſite for our travel towards "Heaven.

Is not this a ſufficient Example of the frailty and uncertainty of *Humane Reaſon?* ſince this Author who is the greateſt pretender to it (even in that Book in which he makes it his buſineſs to perſwade others to follow it and nothing elſe) doth ſo readily fall into ſo apparent an Hereſie and contradiction to himſelf, though by his Book (in which he hath ſo well managed ſo ill a cauſe) we muſt acknowledge him to have the advantage of moſt men in ſtrength of Reaſon.

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Is not this enough to abate our overweening confidence in our own opinions, and make us a little afraid how we follow ſo uncertain a Guide as our own Reaſon, which hath ſo palpably deceived our Author?

This I do acknowledge to him, that by God's Free-grace and Mercy, concurring with the Miniſtry of the Goſpel, every man hath ſufficient Light to ſhow him the way to Heaven, if he will uſe thoſe Helps which God hath prepared for him to that purpoſe: but as for his direction that we muſt ſeek Truth in the centre and heart of our ſelves, if he gives it univerſally to all Men and concerning all Truths (as he ſeems to do in that he hath not at all limited it) he might as well have bid men ſearch there for all the demonſtrations of *Euclid*, though they never had time, nor education enough to make them underſtand ſo much as one of the moſt ordinary operations in Arithmetick, nor one Mathematical Definition or poſtulatum. And he had as good damn ſuch a man to the centre of the Earth as to ſet him to ſearch for Mathematicks in the centre of himſelf, in which there is nothing but guts, and the moſt of men would have as pleaſant a ſearch for Divine Truths in the centre of themſelves, and as ſure they would be to find it there, as the Augurs of old were to find out future events by poring on the guts and garbiſh of brute beaſts. For is not he

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(think you) very likely to find all Divine Truths in the bottom of his heart which are contain'd in the Scriptures, who is not able for his heart to underſtand ſenſe when he reads it in other Authors, nor one word of the genuine Languages of the Sacred Writings. Truly for my part, I am almoſt of the opinion that ſince Truth lies in the bottom, our Author ſhould have bid them ſearch not in the centre but in the bottom of themſelves for it, and then to be ſure (if there was any Truth to be found) they muſt of neceſſity ſmell it out immediately. For this had been a direction much more ſuitable to his ſimilitude, and no leſs beneficial to his vulgar Reader: unleſs he will turn Quaker, and aſſert that upon their ſearch they ſhall immediately be inſpired with new Light that ſhall lead them into all Truth, which when he doth he may expect a further anſwer.

The third *Object.* is that which he himſelf calls the moſt tragical Argument againſt him, *pag. 6. viz.*

" That an univerſal liberty of particular " mens diſcourſes would beget as many Re- " ligions as there are men, which would be " inconſiſtent with the peace of all Socie- " ties.

Which he endeavours to ſhift off by the Examples of the different "Sects of the ancient Philo-

Philoſophers. For (ſaith he) "there were "not fewer Sects in *Athens* then in *Amſter-* "*dam* or *London*: and yet this variety of opi- "nions, neither begat any civil War in *Greece*, "neither was there any Inquiſition, nor High- "commiſſion to prevent it.

This Evaſion is like a great deal more of his Book, meer ſuppoſition. For I believe it will puzzle this Gentleman to prove, that all theſe Sects amongſt the *Athenians* did do any thing more then diſpute theſe things in the publick Schools onely to exerciſe their Wits and improve their Reaſons, to make Truth appear more apparently, and to exerciſe their young Scholars in diſputing that they might better know how to defend their Religion: As now it is and (I believe) ever was in our Univerſities, where all or moſt of thoſe Queſtions are commonly diſputed in the publick Schools that were then argued in *Athens*; to the end that Scholars having heard all Objections amongſt themſelves, might be the more able to defend Truth when they came abroad into the world: So that he that calls theſe Sects in *Athens*, may as well ſay, that there are as many Sects in *Cambridge* or *Oxford* as there are Queſtions diſputed in their publick Exerciſes; which would amount to ſome thouſands every year. For as our Univerſities do allow or at leaſt permit all ſorts of Diſputations and Queſtions freely to be de-

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bated in their Schools and Colledges in a Language not understood amongst the common people, but yet would make a severe example (as far as their power can extend) of him that should preach to the people any thing contrary to the Orthodox Religion established in our Church and Nation, and should endeavour to draw Parties after him; so amongst the *Greeks* and *Romans* it is most probable that the Custom was the same. For we are sure, that whatever their Disputes were in their Academies and Schools of Learning, they had their stated Ceremonies and ways of Worship as well as their particular Deities, which it was in no wise lawful for any one amongst them to dare to contradict in their Discourses or Orations to the common people: and though this Gentleman so pertly saith, that they had no Inquisition nor High-commission, yet Court of Judicature they had, wherein they did condemn all Innovators in matters of Religion, and punished those that were no orious even with capital punishments.

Now that I do not speak this by meer supposition and guess (as this Author doth most things he here saith) I shall give you the testimony of *Josephus* (an Author whose word may go as far as this Gentlemans) who about the latter end of his second Book against *Appion* tells us thus.

"*Plato* commanded all his Citizens perfectly

" ly to learn his Laws, and that they ſhould " perſiſt in the unalterable obſervation of " them: But *Apollonius Molon* (ſaith the ſame Author) " inveigheth againſt us for not " receiving into our Country, Men of ſtrange " Opinions or Religion, whereas not onely we " but the moſt prudent of all the *Greeks* do " the ſame; the *Lacedæmonians* did expel all " ſtrangers; neither did they permit their Ci- " tizens to travel into ſtrange Countries, fear- " ing that by both theſe ways their Laws might " be corrupted. *Apollonius* was ignorant how " matters ſtood with the *Athenians* (and ſurely the Author of *Humane Reaſon* was much more ignorant of them) " who boaſt their " City was free for all Nations; for they did " moſt ſeverely and without all mercy, puniſh " thoſe that did but ſpeak any word againſt " their Gods.

But ſaith this Gentleman, " Every one in " *Greece* enjoyed his Opinion with more ſafety " and freedom then either his Goods or his " Wife, *pag.* 9. But if he means the publick profeſſion of his Opinions, how notorious an hummer he hath told us, will be evident from the Examples the ſame *Joſephus* gives us in the ſame place. " *Socrates* (ſaith he) was put " to death by drinking Hemlock, becauſe he " was accuſed that he corrupted young Men, " and contemned the Laws and Religion of " his Country. *Anaxagoras* for that he affirm'd

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" the Sun (which the *Athenians* worshipped " for a God) to be a fiery Stone, was sentenced " to die. They also proclaimed, that whoe- " ver would kill *Diagoras* of *Melus* should be re- " warded with a Talent for his labour, onely " because this *Diagoras* was said to deride their " mysteries. *Protagoras* also had by them been " taken and put to death, had he not made a " quick escape, onely for that they supposed " him to have written certain doubts concer- " ning the Heathen Gods.

What then would have become of our Author, who endeavours to excuse Atheism had he lived in *Athens*, and enjoyed no other liberty of Opinions then they allowed?

But lest he should object a y thing against *Josephus* his Testimony, the same thing is evident beyond all exceptions, by their so bloudy persecutions of the Christians both amongst the *Greeks* and *Romans*. How much afraid were they of all Innovations in Religion when the most cruel Tortures that the wit and malice of men could invent, as Racks, Gibbets, Gridirons, red-hot Pincers, and flaeing alive, were daily inflicted upon Christians, onely because they taught a new Religion?

This was that great Freedom (as this Gentleman calls it) that was allowed to Dissenters amongst the ancient Heathens. I do not wish our Author should meet with the same

though he ſeems to be ſo much pleaſed with it, and though there was no Inquiſition nor High-Commiſſion amongſt them.

Was ever man thus confident to aſſert things thus palpably falſe, which he (and every one elſe) muſt know to be ſo, unleſs he knows nothing of any Hiſtory?

I ſuppoſe this was one of thoſe Truths which he ſmelt out from the bottom, *viz.* "That this quiet and happineſs which was enjoyed four thouſand years amongſt the Heathen, continued ſo long and ſo uninterrupted, becauſe every man following the rules of his own judgment, allowed that liberty to others, which he found ſo neceſſary for himſelf, as he ſaith, *pag. 9. in fine.*

For the Reaſon is onely the quite contrary, *viz.* becauſe they were ſo careful to preſerve the Publick Unity of Religion by the execution of their Laws. For I think I may juſtly challenge our Author to ſhew me (if he can) any of the ancient Heathens that ever gave a publick toleration of all Religions; though (if he could prove it) Chriſtians ought not to follow their Examples, becauſe we have a poſitive and ſtated Religion given us by God in a moſt clear and infallible Revelation, which our Governors ought to eſtabliſh and maintain; ſo that whatſoever he hath ſaid to the contrary, it is evident by the conſent of the whole World, that were there not Laws to re-

reſtrain particular mens publick diſcourſes, there would ſoon be as many Religions as there are men; and ſo the Argument remains as tragical as ever it did. For it appears by the Votes of all Nations, that varieties and alterations in Religion were always thought to be inconſiſtent with the publick peace and ſafety.

As for that ſlie inſinuation with which he concludes that Paragraph (*pag.* 10.) "That "even the Stoicks themſelves that enſlaved the "Will, durſt never attempt this violence to "the underſtanding.

I would fain know of this Gentleman whether the Church of *England* goes about to enſlave any mans underſtanding? hath not every one in her Communion a liberty of thinking what he pleaſes? All that the Church of *England* enjoyns us, is, that we ſhall worſhip God decently and orderly, and ſhall conſent to the Articles of the Chriſtian Faith, and not contradict thoſe few Articles which ſhe hath given us; but for peace ſake ſhall quietly ſubmit to them, and to her moſt moderate Diſcipline. I appeal even to this Author himſelf, whether the Members of any Society in the World, either Heathen or Chriſtian have a greater freedom of exerciſing their underſtandings then thoſe of the Church of *England*? If he cannot produce me any that have; then to what purpoſe doth he talk to *Engliſh*

men of violence to their understandings ? unless it be *fortiter calumniari ut aliquid hæreret*: which is a practice so much below a Gentleman, that sure our Author should be ashamed of it, or else he is a shame to the Honourable Title of an *English* Gentleman.

I pray you Sir, tell me upon your Reputation what you meant, and of whom you spake those things, *Pag.* 12, 13. If you meant the Church of *England*, I must tell you, that you do not know any thing of Her, though She be your own Mother.

Doth the Church of *England* teach her Followers to damn all that are not of their way? So far is She from it, and so prodigiously charitable, that She doth not exempt even those that die in a wilful separation from her (unless they be actually excommunicated) from Her most Christian Form of Burial, in which She professeth to hope of their salvation.

Is there any Son of the Church of *England* that believes some Errours (that are the inseparable companions of Humane Nature) do exclude men from the Communion of the present Church, or the hope of the future?

And as for that which he saith, that then we could not be so cruel to persecute those faults to which God is so merciful, and from which we our selves are not exempt.

I answer, That our Church punisheth no man for any Errour, unless it be accompanied with

with contumacy and contempt of Authority, and does not every Society in the World do the same? If then he will needs call this cruelty and Persecution, he not onely accuseth our Church, but all the Nations of the World of those hard words.

He might (I think) well have spared all that Discourse (from *Pag.* 10, to the 14.) about the causes of so much bloudshed since the Reformation, unless he intended to make the Reformation guilty of all the bloud shed ever since it first began. However, sure I am, he cannot lay it at the door of our Church, since there is none of her true Sons that ever was so mad to be guilty of any of those Causes which he gives of it.

As for his confident Assertion with which he concludes that Section, it is much more applicable to the Papists and Fanaticks, then to the truly Reformed. For there are no men living that so much tie Infallibility to what they think Truth, and Damnation to what they think Errours, as they do at *Rome* and *Geneva*, and such amongst us, who have listed themselves under their Banners.

As for his peaceable Doctrine he so much boasts of, *Pag.* 11, 12. *viz.*

"That every man should be suffered quietly to enjoy his own Opinion; and his own "Opinion is this, that he should suffer o-"thers to do the same.

As to the first part of it; I answer it is granted him.

For there is no Society in the World that can take notice of matters of meer opinion: but when those Opinions break out into practice, so as to disturb the publick peace, or at least to endanger a disturbance, when men make use of them to draw Parties after them, and to make Factions in a Nation, then those Governours must be blind that will not see to suppress them. And this is not punishing men for their Opinions, but their Practices in divulging and propagating those Opinions which are contrary to the Laws and publick safety.

As for the second Part of it, that every man should have that Opinion implanted in him to suffer all others to enjoy their Opinions.

I answer, First, That it is almost impossible to suppose this to be, or that it ever can be the Opinion of every man. For if men do sincerely believe that their Opinion is the Truth, and necessary to Happiness, then they must also think themselves bound to propagate it to all others.

But Secondly, Could we suppose this Opinion to be in every man, yet this would not maintain the Peace of a Nation, if there were no Laws, to restrain men from being led by their Passions and Interest to act contrary to their Opinions. For I appeal to themselves to know

know whether the Papists and Presbyterians do not act contrary to their own Principles in promoting a toleration of all Opinions? If they dare deny it, it will be easily proved against them. For the Grand Turk himself doth not more violently persecute the Christians, then both these do all such as differ from them in Religion, where they have power enough to do it. Witness the Inquisition at this day in *Spain* and *Italy*; and the practice of the other Party in *New-England*, where they punish Dissenters from them even with Capital Punishments. Which are both so apparent to all the World, that they must have Faces of Brass that dare to deny them.

And though now whilst they are entangled and restrain'd by the Law, they are very quiet and tame (like the Lion in the net) yet let them but loose and they will soon shew their natural inclinations and fall to their old wont of tearing and devouring all others that stand in their way.

Thirdly, That it will be altogether as hard a restraint to most men to be held by Law from acting in Religion contrary to our Authors opinion, which he would have universal, as it is for them to be kept to an uniformity in Doctrine, Discipline and Worship. So that this Opinion without Law, is but a rope of Sand, which can never hold men together in Peace and Unity. But this I shall (I think) demonstrate afterwards.

The Fourth *Objection* he would anſwer is this, *Pag.* 14.

"That if we guide our ſelves wholly by "our own Reaſon, we ſhall differ from our "ſelves as well as all others, and change "our Religion as often as our Habits.

To which the Author anſwers, *p.* 15. that "He cannot conceive that the fear of this ſcan- "dal obligeth us to a blind and unalterable ob- "ſervance of thoſe Laws and Opinions, to "which either the fate of our Birth and Edu- "cation, or other accidents have engaged us.

Truly nor I neither; For hath not every one a Liberty either to act according to the Laws he lives under, or elſe to ſuffer the penalties appointed by them, or elſe to leave that place and Countrey in which thoſe Laws are in force? What need then of any ſuch blind obedience? I proteſt I do not underſtand it, any more then I do conceive how all thoſe Hereſies, Schiſms, Factions, and Debaucheries (to which every man is expoſed who guides himſelf wholly by his own Reaſon) are onely a ſcandal (as this Gentleman calls them) and not actual and damnable ſins.

Sure I am, they are ſo accounted by St. *Paul* and St. *Peter* in their Epiſtles; but it may be this Author's *Humane Reaſon* doth not lead him to conſult the Sacred Scriptures.

But this he excuſes, *p* 18 &c. by ſaying that, "If after all our induſtry and humility, it be

"be our ill fortune to give away a Truth for "a Falſhood, it will be at the worſt, but an "Errour by chance medley, and will find, "nay even claim mercy from God, and de- "ſerve pity from Men.

In anſwer to which, I ſhall ſay no more but this, That there is nothing but invincible ignorance that can poſſibly excuſe the breach of a known Law, if the matter of it be neither impoſſible nor ſinful; and therefore where the Matter is doubtful the Authority ſhould overſway us.

For in all doubtful Caſes the ſafer part is to be taken: and it is much ſafer to err in obedience to God's Vicegerents, then it is to err on the contrary ſide. For if we err in doubtful matters with authority, it is but a bare Errour at the moſt, and that on the right hand; but if we ſhould be miſtaken, and thereby diſobey our lawful Magiſtrates, our Errour is then joined with diſobedience to the Ordinance of God, as the Apoſtle calls every Ordinance of Man, *Rom.* 13. 1, 2. and if we perſiſt in this Errour and act according to the conſequence of it, we are too eaſily, before we are aware, hurried into thoſe horrid ſins of Schiſm, Hereſie, Sedition and Rebellion.

It therefore behoveth every one that ſeparateth from our Church, ſeriouſly to examine his own Soul whether or no he doth believe (after he hath uſed his utmoſt induſtry

in informing himself both from his own Reason, and from the Reason of others, (especially of his lawful Ministers) that the Church of *England* doth enjoyn him any thing that is sinful in it self; and if he cannot find her guilty of any such command, then his separation can be no ways excusable.

This I more particularly refer to the consideration of those persons, who but a year or two since joyn'd in her Communion; and especially of those who communicated with her upon the late Act of Parliament for the conviction of Romanists, and yet did separate themselves immediately from her publick Congregations, and continue still in their separation.

For if it was not sin in them to receive the Sacrament according ro her Rites of Administration of it (which was the highest act of Communion and Conformity with her) could it be sin in them the next day to join with her in her publick Liturgy? so that their own practice must convince them that their's is a wilful sin, not an Errour by chance-medley.

But their great Friend our Author will find them out an Expedient to take away that concern from them. Alas, poor tender-conscienced people! Why should they be put to touch their consciences so hard? there is danger in it, it may make them quite sore since they are so tender already. No, no, onely come but

to

to this excellent Physician, and do but see him well, and he will give you a Plaister for your tender Consciences, that shall without any pain or trouble heal them immediately. The Receit you have, *p* 18. of his Book about the end. For,

He there finds you out a way how you may be Papists one seven years, and Protestants another, and yet your Faith still the very same (though I had thought the Romanists Creed had been directly contrary in many things to the Protestants) but it is no matter for that, this Gentleman hath one Panpharmacon, that cures all Diseases whatsoever though never so contrary one to another, *viz.* a pretty-little-balsamick similitude, and this it is. There is such an identity in their faith, as there is in the eye which changes every seven years; and if their Faith be but actuated by the same soul of Faith, that is Conscience, if they keep but their Consciences inviolable, they may say with this very Faith, as well as with these Eyes, I shall see my Redeemer.

If this Gentleman had pleas'd, he might as well have said, that they might be Heathens one seven years and Christians another, and their Faith still the same. For the same Plaister well applied, would have heal'd this wound in the conscience as well as the other every jot.

For do but suppose that their Consciences were

were but erroneous, they might ſtill keep their conſciences inviolable, under both theſe contrary Religions; (*i. e.*) they might be ſincere both when they were Chriſtians and when Heathens; and yet can any one think that the Chriſtian Faith and the Belief of the Heathens is the ſame Faith? Yes, (Quoth our Author) they are the very ſame exactly in effect; both as to the Heathen and the Chriſtian (let him change as often as he will) ſo he keep his conſcience but inviolable, he ſhall go as ſafe to Heaven as thoſe poor ignorant well-meaning Martyrs that ſacrificed their lives, rather then they would admit of the leaſt appearance of any change in their Religion. Pity it is this Gentleman was not living ſome 1500 years agone, what abundance of good Men might have been ſaved by this his Plaiſter, which for want of it bled to death.

For our Author could have told them, as long as their mind and intentions had been, but to have ſtill continued Chriſtians; or if they had been miſtaken in their judgments, and had thought they might have done it, they had been as good Chriſtians, and as happy as any Martyr of them all, though they had ſacrificed to the Devil himſelf. For that ſtill if a mans conſcience be erroneous, he may poſſibly all this while act according to his conſcience, and ſo keep his conſcience ſtill inviolable.

But (I pray you Sir) do you believe your own

own Doctrine? Can you think that an erroneous conscience shall excuse all crimes whatsoever? then I assure you I should be very loth to trust my life in your Hands. For you might think your self a very good Christian, and yet cut my throat. For according to your Argument a man may murder his Prince or his Father, if his erroneous conscience tell him he may do it (as I shall afterwards prove it may) and yet be a very good Christian.

If this be true; sure our Author hath said enough to awaken our Magistrates to take care how mens consciences are inform'd and taught; and not to let men alone to their own Reasons, unless they have a mind to have their throats cut by good conscientious Christians.

But an erroneous conscience can in no case certainly excuse, but where the Errour proceeds from such causes as the person could no ways help, as in the case of natural Fools and Mad-men, and in them it onely frees from the guilt and crime *in foro interno* but not from the punishment *in foro externo*. For we have a Bedlam, and a Whip for Mad-men and Fools, as well as Stocks and Prisons and Gallows for Knaves and Rogues.

Therefore let not our Separatists think, that their Errours shall excuse them before God, unless they think themselves stark Fools or Mad-men, that it is impossible for them to be better inform'd: nor that they ought to be par-

pardoned before Men. For let them pretend to what conſcience they will for their actions, if they act contrary to the Laws, the Magiſtrate is bound in conſcience to puniſh them, becauſe of his Oath, according to the ſentence of the Law: otherwiſe ſhould mens Errours excuſe them from penalty, all the crimes in the world would thereby be tolerated, and Chriſtianity quite deſtroyed. For men that were led into Errours might deny Chriſt, and yet need not fear any puniſhment for it, becauſe they might in it act according to their erroneous conſciences, and ſo keep their conſciences ſtill inviolable.

What a company of Fools are we that take pains in ſtudying to free our ſelves from Errour? whereas (if this be true which our Author hath here endevoured to prove) it is much more ſafe for us not to trouble our conſciences at all with information; for if we do but act according to our conſciences all's well enough, though they are never ſo wilfully erroneous.

This it ſeems is the new and módiſh way of drilling in Popery amongſt us, by bringing Men to renounce Chriſtianity, by accounting all Religions indifferent; as is evident by the Jeſuites practiſe upon the Quakers and Hectors of the Town, and that general Deſign of theirs of debauching our young Nobility and Gentry (wherever they can) with a contempt

tempt of Religion. He that doubts of this, may be fully satisfied by a late Treatise, call'd *Fiat Lux*, in which this Design is most conspicuous: from which I cannot but believe this Author hath taken the main of his *Humane Reasons*. And indeed there can be no readier way possibly found out of bringing in the Romish Religion then this of rooting out Christianity; for as long as the Christian Principles remain firm in mens minds, it is impossible any one should change from the Church of *England* to the so palpable Errours, Juggles, Phantacism, and Idolatry of the Church of *Rome*.

But to argue with these Gentlemen upon their own Principles, If all kinds of Religion are so indifferent to them, why then should they not keep close to that of their own Country? since the consent of all Nations shews us that alterations in Religion are very dangerous to the publick peace and safety of any Kingdom.

Now that the Design of this Author is the very same with that of *Fiat Lux* will be evident to any attentive Reader, that will but seriously consider what he saith from *p.* 20. to the 37. or else I must confess that I am most grosly mistaken.

For having foreseen that it was possible for men by an erroneous conscience to excuse (according to his Doctrine) even the renouncing Chri-

Christianity and the denying of Christ himself. He answereth that Objection not by recanting an opinion of so horrid a consequence to the Christian Religion, but by endeavouring to prove that the same might possibly follow, that Men might deny Christ by following any other guide as well as this of *Humane Reason*.

Nay, to show the advantage of his principle above all others, he declaims at a most prodigious rate of the great charitableness of His Opinion, that would set Heaven Gates so wide open, that Turks, Jews, Heathens, nay Atheists themselves might find an entrance thereat.

Now what doth this tend to in the direct consequence, but the very same as that other Treatise before mentioned? *viz.* to prove that Men may be saved by any kind of Religion whatsoever. And herein the two good wits jump exactly; onely this Gentleman doth a little out-do the former, by not excluding Atheists from the Kingdom of Heaven: and by consequence he insinuates into the minds of men, that as to the main end which all aim at, *viz.* Happiness, It is indifferent whether men be Christians, Jews, Turks, Heathens, or Atheists: that is, in a word, whether Men have any Religion or none at all.

Is not this an admirable advantage that this Gentleman hath above all others in his *Humane Reason*?

But

But I ſhall not ſpend time in declaiming againſt it, but will endeavour throughly to anſwer his Reaſons for it. He endeavours to prove this firſt Aſſertion by a particular Examination of other Principles.

The firſt Principle he examines, is that of the private Spirit, or new Light.

This I eaſily grant is in its direct conſequence a flat denial of the whole Goſpel: but then this is our Authors own Opinion. For put but the Queſtion home to any Quaker what he means by the *Light within him*? and his Anſwer ſhall be either an evaſion of the Queſtion by running into railing, or elſe by ſome other terms of Art amongſt them, as *Chriſt within them*, &c. or elſe they muſt be forced to confeſs that they mean nothing elſe but natural Conſcience (*i.e.*) *Humane Reaſon* by all their Cant of New Light. From whence nothing can be more evident then this, that ſince they make onely their natural Conſcience (or *Humane Reaſon* as our Author doth) the onely Rule of all their Actions, they are at beſt but good Heathens. Now whether he ſaw this conſequence of his Book or no, it ſeems they did. For (as I am very credibly informed) they ſent an Agent extraordinary to this Author to give him thanks for his Book. Who (when he told their Agent that he was no Friend of the Quakers Opinion) was anſwered that he had ſet a fair ſtep towards it,

for

for which they gave him thanks. Now I wonder that our Jews, Infidels, and Atheists, together with all the debauched persons in *London*, were not as Gentile as the Quakers to pay their due thanks to this Author; who hath as well deserved it from every one of them, as he did from those his light-headed friends and acquaintance.

The Second Principle he exámines, is the Authority of Men; particularly that of a Council.

"Which (he saith) may as well lead men "to deny Christ, as every mans own Reason. "And for proof of it, he instanceth in the "great Council of the *Arrians* (as he is "pleased to call it) that condemned *Athanasius* and denied the Divinity of Christ: "and therefore were no more to be called "Christians, then *Abrahamists* or *Davidists*.

To this I shall return no other Answer but these following Questions.

1. Whether it is not probable that this great meeting of the *Arrians* might not rather be called a *Club* of them pack'd together by the command of *Constantius*, who was wheadled into that Party, then to be thought a General Council rightly called and ordered? to which all Parties ought to be summoned and to be heard freely to speak their sense and opinions in any Debate. Which let the Authour prove

prove (if he can) was observed in this Council.

2. Whether or no the grand controversie there decreed, *viz* that ὁμοούσιος not ὁμοιούσιος should be put into the Creed, did amount to a denial of Christs Divinity? For I do not see but that they might believe that Christ was God, though they could not determine the manner of his Divine Essence, and his procession from the Father; As our Church doth agree in the Real Presence of Christ in the Sacrament, though we profess not to know the manner of it.

But however, I appeal to this Gentleman himself, whether or no this did amount to a denial of Christ? and desire to know of him, whether or no the *Arrians* did believe, or profess to believe that *Abraham* or *David* was sent by God into the World to make satisfaction for the sins of mankind, and to preach the Christian Law to the World; or whether they did deny Christs satisfaction and the Christian Law? If they did deny neither of these, then they cannot be said to be *Abrahamists* or *Davidists*, as well as Christians: neither is it possible for them to exalt any other Prophet above Christ (as he saith they might) if they did acknowledge Christ only, to be their Law-giver and Redeemer.

As for the 3. Council of *Nice*, that established the Worshipping of Images, it may also

alſo he enquired, Whether that was a lawful General Council, or onely a Conventicle of the Popes Creatures? And whether (as they had ſince to *Trent*) the Holy Ghoſt was not ſent them from *Rome* in a Cloak-bag by which they governed all their Tranſactions?

If ſo, then it was no General Council: and therefore makes nothing againſt the Authority of a General Council rightly called and qualified; which may with good Reaſon be ſuppoſed to be guided in all their Sanctions by Gods holy, bleſſed, all-wiſe, and immaculate Spirit.

But Secondly, If we could ſuppoſe that this was a lawful General Council, yet if this Gentleman would but conſult the Records of it; and not onely invent notions of it from his own phantaſie; he ſhould find by the Reaſons that are there given for the uſe of Images in the Worſhip of God, and by the particular Images which they decreed to be ſet up, *viz.* no other but of Chriſt, the *Virgin Mary*, the Apoſtles and Chriſtian Saints and Martyrs, that it was not poſſible for them to have fallen into a denial of Chriſtianity thereby.

Nay, ſo far were they from it, that the main Reaſon that is given for the uſe of Images is, that they might be as Books to the ignorant to inſtruct them in the main Articles of the Chriſtian Religion; and might encourage them to ſuffer Martyrdom for it, by the ſo many Examples

amples of those that had gone before them, which they daily beheld and adored.

But it may be our Author thinks it enough for him with his grateful friends the Quakers to consult the Light within him, and to throw away all books but his own.

Now by what I have said in answer to this Author, it is evident that it is so far from being true, that General Councils may equally lead men to a denial of Christ, as every mans private reason, that this Author is not able to instance in any one General Council (or any thing like a General Council) that ever gave the world so much as a possibility of it in any of their Canons and Decrees. Whereas all the Apostates that ever were in the world, had some reason or other which they followed, or else something that they thought a Reason, for deserting Christianity. So unsafe and dangerous is it to follow our own Reasons (which are so easily and damnably mistaken) in opposition to the Universal Church.

But what doth he tell us of the Church of *England*, of these Councils of *Ariminum*, and the 2/7 of *Nice*? For these were never acknowledged to be General Councils of any Son of our Church. Let him (if he can) charge the four first General Councils (according to which our Reformation was carried on) with the least of Errours. Which, if he cannot do, then those Councils must remain a safer Rule for

for us and all men, then every mans particular Reaſon.

The third Principle he examines, is the Tradition of the former and preſent Ages.

To this our Author ſaith, That "what thoſe "Traditions were of the former, or what "are the Commands of the preſent Church, "are no ways to be known but by truſting "ſome number of men preſent, which is "not without the poſſibility of being miſ-"guided, *&c.*

But what then? Is not the ſame difficulty applicable to all Hiſtory whatſoever? and yet he that will give an account of former Times, muſt not invent it out of his own *Humane Reaſon*, but muſt conſult Hiſtorians for it.

But then (ſaith this Gentleman) this is to fall into that opinion you condemn in me. No ſurely, no man is ſo fooliſh to condemn the uſe of our own Reſon in reading Hiſtory ſo far as to judge of the true meaning of the words: all that can be condemned by any man of common ſenſe (is that which I apprehend our Author would wheadle into other men, though he cannot be ſo much a fool to follow it himſelf) *viz.* the relying on our naked reaſon ſo far as to exclude other more neceſſary helps; eſpecially in ſuch matters (as theſe of Hiſtory) concerning which Reaſon alone

alone can be no competent Judge.

But yet this Gentleman is so confident positively to affirm, *pag.* 26. that "They that build "their Faith upon past or present Ages, are "in much greater danger of being drawn from "the Christian Faith, then those who remit "the judgment of these things wholly to their "own Reason. Whereas if he had considered things aright, he must needs have seen that the main cause why our Reason will dictate to us that Christianity is the true Religion, must be from the constant Tradition of the former Ages of the Church. For from hence it is that we believe the Gospel to be the Writings of the Apostles; from hence it is that we believe the Historical part of it, and by consequence from hence it must proceed that we believe the Doctrines contained in it.

But let us hear his Reason for this bold Assertion, it is nothing else but this, that "There "hath been the Authority of an hundred to "one against Christianity, and that backed "with the Universal Agreement of three thou-"sand years before. Certainly it is not possible for him to believe that this is any thing of a satisfactory Argument. For did ever any body reckon the Tradition of the Heathens and Jews for the ground of the Christian Faith? Does he not know that by Tradition every Christian (that knows what he saith) means the Tradition of the Church of Christ? Can this then be

any

any Reason against it, that the Heathens and Jews did not assert it?

I am altogether of his Opinion, that Reason will demonstrate the Christian above any other Riligion; but still the Authority of the Christian Church, together with the Gospel must acquaint us what Christianity is, otherwise meer Reason could never know it. So that let Reason alone, though it be never so well followed with constancy, diligence, and sobriety, it can demonstrate nothing of Christianity if it is not backed with the Authority of the Church.

Now I appeal to the Author himself to know how it is possible that the Universal Tradition of the Christian Church should lead us into such Errours, as should cause us to deny Christ? Was there ever any Age of Christians which did generally fall into the denial of Christ? How could they then be called Christians who renounced the very essence of Christianity?

Now because this Author hath not told us what Helps and Directions a Christian must make use of to inform his Reason in matters of Religion, I shall lay him down such a Rule as can never fail him in his main end, his future happiness; unless he be false to his Rule. The Rule in general is this:

The

To the interpretation of which, is neceſſary a due meditation and apprehenſion of the ſcope and coherence of the words, with a knowledge of the Original Languages and the peculiar Idioms of them, together with the knowledge of the Cuſtoms of thoſe times and places in which thoſe things were done, ſpoken and written; which makes all Judaick and Eccleſiaſtical Authors, eſpecially Hiſtorians to be very requiſite: eſpecially as to the underſtanding the New Teſtament. For many things are but curſorily mentioned in the Goſpel; and therefore are beſt explained by the Writings of thoſe that were converſant with the Apoſtles and their Succeſſors, who did converſe with them, and ſo on, which calls in the aſſiſtance of all Antiquity, eſpecially the ancient Fathers of the three firſt Centuries, and the four firſt General Councils; and after all, a ſound rational Soul, as neceſſary to lay theſe together where they agree, and to judge which is moſt to be relied on where they differ, and to draw well grounded conſequences from them, together with the Divine aſſiſtance concurring with all theſe means: ſo that the common people that have not theſe advantages (though they may have as good and ſound rational Faculties as the greateſt Scholars, and can exerciſe them as judiciouſly in other things, in which they have had convenience

ence rightly to inform themſelves) are no more fit to interpret Scripture, then they are to Comment on *Euclid* or *Archimedes*. For that they have not thoſe helps which are neceſſary for ſuch a Work.

But what then muſt they do? they muſt uſe the beſt means that God hath given them, (*i.e.*) the Directions of the Church, and of thoſe Perſons whom the Church hath by Gods Commiſſion ordained over them to be their Guides and Inſtructers.

And though perhaps by their Guides unskilfulneſs, or the corruption of the Church they are members of, (though this laſt cannot be ſuppoſed in the Church of *England*, becauſe it is free from all corruption in Doctrine) they may be led into Errours; yet ſince they have made uſe of the beſt means God hath given them, he doth not require impoſſibilities at their hands; and therefore will not impute thoſe Errours to their Faults, which he hath never given them power to help.

Whereas on the contrary, if every one of the common people muſt be left wholly to the guidance of his own Reaſon, they muſt neceſſarily run into as many Religions as there are men, and worſhip a ſeveral Deity, not onely every day of the week, but every hour of the day: and by thinking themſelves as wiſe as their Teachers, come to deſpiſe and contemn them, and to trample under foot all Or-

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der and Decency, to ſcorn the Laws of their Magiſtrates; and in a word, to run themſelves into all confuſion, danger, and wickedneſs.

This ſome men ſee well enough to be the natural conſequence of this Opinion; and therefore they who have a mind to make diviſions amongſt us, do nothing elſe but cry up Conſcience and every mans own Reaſon. For if they can but thus ſeparate the Sheep from the Shepherds, they will ſoon make them ſtray ſo far till they get them into their own Pound.

Theſe are the mighty advantages that the moſt of men would obtain by following no other Guide but their own Reaſon.

The next advantage of his Opinion, is the great charitableneſs of it, *viz.* That

"It ſets the Gate of Heaven ſo wide open,
"that all perſons whatſoever may enter.

This is Charity indeed with a Witneſs; to fill Heaven like *Noah's* Ark with all ſorts of Beaſts both clean and unclean.

But I am afraid there's ſomething elſe in the caſe beſides altogether Charity, that prompts the Author to this opinion; he tells us ſo himſelf, and therefore we may believe him, that the humble conſideration of his own weakneſs was another ſtrong motive to him. It ſeems the Gentleman begins to think, that if there be no entrance into Heaven for Jews, Turks, Heathens, and Atheiſts, he himſelf

ſhall ſcarce ever come there.

As for his Opinion; that all theſe are in an equal poſſibility of ſalvation with the unerring Chriſtian: certainly never any man that called himſelf by that name, did ever go about to defend it before this Author; eſpecially as to the latter of them, the Atheiſt. However I will give his cauſe a fair hearing according to the Chriſtian Law, and leave it to the Readers to give in the Verdict.

As for the Jews and Heathens: though I dare not ſay they are damned, becauſe I do not know what allowance God (of his mercy through Chriſts ſatisfaction for the ſins of the whole World) may make for thoſe inſuperable prejudices that they labour under, yet certainly they can never be in an equal capacity of ſalvation with the unerring Chriſtian.

Firſt, Becauſe the Heathens have no certain Guide, onely a probable Rule to walk by, that muſt lead them to Happineſs.

Secondly, Both Jews and Heathens want thoſe Divine and excellent Examples, and thoſe infinite obligations which Chriſtianity affords us to bind us to our Duty.

Thirdly, They want the certainty and clear revelation of eternal rewards and puniſhments to affright and perſwade them to their duty, and to baffle all temptations that they might meet with to draw them from it. For there is no Religion in the whole world that doth ſo clear-

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ly and certainly discover a future Immortality as this which our Saviour Jesus Christ hath given us. For he hath brought Life and Immortality to light through the Gospel. He then that considers the meer reason of the thing, can never conclude that they are in an equal possibility of salvation with the Christian; much less with the unerring Christian as our Author hath said; because they want those helps which Christians have. I shall not further examine this by my own reason, but had rather (as becomes a Christian that useth sometimes to consult the Scripture as well as *Humane Reason*) to leave them to the judgment of God, and to acquiesce in the determination of St. *Paul*, *Rom.* 2. *v.* 13. to the 17. where he saith (I think as plainly as words can express) that they shall be wholly condemned or acquitted by their own conscience. For they that have no Law are a Law unto themselves, *&c.* their consciences bearing witness and their thoughts in the mean while accusing or else excusing one another, In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ.

But whatever may become of them, sure I am that we that have had all the advantages that can possibly be given to men to make us good Christians, (being brought up from our cradles in the best constituted Christian Church in the World) if we should Apostatize, can have no hope of salvation remaining for us.

For if we will believe S *Peter Acts* 4. *v.* 11, 12. *There is no other Name given amongſt men by which we can be ſaved.* For if it hold againſt any, it muſt againſt us, who have been baptized into that Name.

For St. *Paul* tells us, *Heb.* 10. from *verſ.* 26. to the 30. *That if we ſin wilfully after we have received the knowledge of the Truth, there remains no more ſacrifice for ſin, but a fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation that ſhall devour the adverſary.* And that the Apoſtle there means that particular ſin of Apoſtacy is evident from the following words. *He that deſpiſed* Moſes *his Law died without mercy, of how much ſorer puniſhment* (think you) *ſhall he be thought worthy who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the Bloud of the Covenant, wherewith he was ſanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done deſpite unto the Spirit of grace?*

Now let every one that calls himſelf Chriſtian, chooſe whether he will believe the Apoſtles or this Gentleman.

As for the latter that Atheiſts too are equally capacitated to ſalvation as the unerring Chriſtian, which he affirms, *Pag.* 30.

For having propoſed the Queſtion in theſe words,

"What then, ſhall we believe Turks, Jews, "Heathens and Atheiſts in an equal poſſibi-"lity of ſalvation with the unerring Chri-"ſtian?

He

He no where denies it, but endeavours all that ever he can to defend it; as in his following discourse.

"Because there are a thousand accidents "that hinder the greatest part of the World "from a fair proposal of the Principles of "Christianity; therefore so small a part of "mankind hath submitted to the Christian "Faith.

What then? therefore they may be saved. No; for this doth not directly follow; for God hath no where promised that he will accept of Christs Merits for them, nor apply them to them: and we cannot but know that since they are left to the sentence of their own conscience, there are few men whose consciences will not condemn them of gross and wilful sins; and therefore shall rather accuse them then excuse them in the day of the Lord Jesus. So that here is but a small probability left of the salvation of most of them, even by this Authors own Reason which he gives us (*Pag.* 33.) because they have deserted themselves, that is, their own Reason as well as God.

But however the disadvantages they labour under, may in a great part excuse them that are without; there can be no excuse to those that are within (*i, e.*) to us here in *England*, who labour under none of their disadvantages.

And if the A[illegible]
no excuse, [illegible]
For he [illegible]
For he [illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible] the glory of God, [illegible]
[illegible] his hand-[illegible]. And [illegible]
[illegible] is impossible to be [illegible]
(*de Fals Rel lib.* 1. *c.* 1.) " [illegible]
" so rude and [illegible], but [illegible]
" into Heaven, must necessarily [illegible]
" in a Divine Providence which [illegible]
" and did at first create it, from [illegible]
" Greatness, the constant Motion [illegible]
" Order, the never-failing Cons[illegible]
" ver enough admired Benefits [illegible]
" amazing beauty of the things [illegible]
" For it cannot possibly be, but [illegible]
" shews an admirable wisdom [illegible]
" vance, should demonstrate a grea[illegible]
" in him who made it.

So that no man that hath any eyes [illegible]
or any sense of the frame of his own [illegible]
any consideration of that Principle [illegible]
acts, can have any possible excuse for [illegible]
tance of the being of a God.

For what he saith further in exc[illegible]
Atheist, p. 36. It may alleviate the [illegible]
Infidel, but it can abate nothing of [illegible]

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And if the Apoſtate amongſt us can have no excuſe, then ſurely the Atheiſt much leſs. For he cannot plead that he did not know God. For he can turn his eyes no where, but he beholds ſomething or other whoſe frame is ſo admirable, that it proclaims its Author to be infinitely wiſe and powerful; For *the Heavens declare the glory of God, and the Firmament ſhews his handy-work*. And that Argument of *Lactantius* is impoſſible to be anſwered, *viz.* (*de Falſ Rel lib. 1. c. 2.*) "No man can be "ſo rude and brutiſh, but when he looks up "into Heaven, muſt neceſſarily know that there "is a Divine Providence which governs it, "and did at firſt create it, from the immenſe "Greatneſs, the conſtant Motion, the All-wiſe "Order, the never-failing Conſtancy, the ne-"ver enough admired Benefits, and the "amazing beauty of the things he beholds. "For it cannot poſſibly be, but that which "ſhews an admirable wiſdom in its contri-"vance, ſhould demonſtrate a greater wiſdom "in him who made it.

So that no man that hath any eyes in his head, or any ſenſe of the frame of his own body, or any conſideration of that Principle by which it acts, can have any poſſible excuſe for his ignorance of the being of a God.

For what he ſaith further in excuſe for the Atheiſt, *p. 36.* It may alleviate the crime of an Infidel, but it can abate nothing of the guilt of

of an Atheiſt. For he cannot pretend that he never heard of God. For the Heavens and the Earth do daily proclaim him. Neither can he pretend that he cannot bring his conſcience to aſſent to it, ſince it is the natural dictate of all mankind. But let our Author pretend what he can to the contrary, he that will believe the Apoſtle St. *Paul*, *Rom.* 1. *v.* 19, 20. muſt be fully ſatisfied as to this point, that there can be no excuſe for Atheiſts. Becauſe that which may be known of God is manifeſt in them; for God hath ſhewn it to them. For the inviſible things of him are clearly ſeen from the Creation of the world by the things that are made, even his eternal Power and Godhead. From whence the Apoſtle concludes, ſo that they are left without excuſe. But it is no matter with our Author what the Apoſtle ſaith. For his Guide (*i. e.*) his Reaſon tells him that Jews, Turks, Heathens, and Atheiſts are in an equal poſſibility of ſalvation with the unerring Chriſtian.

Now I may appeal even to this Author himſelf, whether I have done him any wrong in comparing his Book with *Fiat Lux*, ſince it is ſo plainly apparent by his words, that his Deſign is (if not the ſame) much worſe then the Deſign of that Book. For who would have gone about to defend ſuch a Queſtion (in a tract ſo exactly fitted for the reading of the common people) that had not

a Deſign to wheadle them into an indifferency in all matters of Religion, and even to Atheiſm it ſelf? But ſurely if they have any conſideration left in them, this very diſcourſe would be enough to make them miſtruſtful and fearful of ſuch a Guide which may be ſo eaſily miſtaken as this of *Humane Reaſon*; and when it is miſtaken, does ſo eaſily lead them into the moſt damnable of Errours, even into the contempt of all Religion.

But now we ſee (by this Author) what kind of Animals they are who are Factors for *Rome* and a Toleration, and by what excellent means they carry on their Deſign, *viz.* by firſt perſwading men to Atheiſm, by an indifferency in all Religion.

From whence I cannot but take an occaſion to remind our Diſſenters how much they promote Popery, and deſtroy Chriſtianity by joyning with the Papiſts, and the debauchees of our Nation in promoting a toleration: and our Governours that if they think of keeping their Necks from the *Roman* Yoke, they muſt then maintain the eſtabliſhed Religion of the Church in its true Chriſtian practiſe and Primitive Diſcipline. For how much Atheiſm and an Univerſal neglect of all Religion, hath encreaſed ſince our Laws have been laid to ſleep, he muſt be ſtark blind that doth not ſee!

To our Author I ſhall onely add this, That I am ſorry with all my heart that a perſon of his

his parts and Reaſon ſhould give any occaſion to be thought a Favourer of Atheiſm. For who can think that he is not very much a well-willer to Atheiſts, who endeavours to prove that they are in an equal poſſibility of ſalvation with the unerring Chriſtian? It may be he may think to ſhift off this juſt ſuſpition of Atheiſm by the help of his Parentheſis, *viz.* (if there be any ſuch) For who can ſuſpect him to be an Atheiſt, or a Favourer of them who ſcarce ſuppoſeth that there can be any ſuch men as Atheiſts in the world? But we know every Animal will moſt ſtrive to defend that part which is ſore, and will winch and kick when any thing comes near it.

The Fifth *Object.* which our Author would ſhake off, is that of Schiſm. "Which (ſaith "he) is the ordinary railing word in all "Controverſies and a ſlander, *&c.*

Is there then (good Sir) no ſuch thing as Schiſm, becauſe that word is often abuſed and miſapplied; you might (if you had pleas'd) as well have ſaid there is no ſuch thing as *Humane Reaſon*, becauſe your Book hath abuſed and miſapplied thoſe words to countenance your Errours.

Are all Schiſmaticks to be excuſed, becauſe ſome have been ſlander'd with that Title? As well may all Thieves and Murderers be excuſed, becauſe ſome have been ſlandered and falſly accuſed of thoſe Crimes: It

It will be then neceſſary to know who Schiſmaticks are; and the danger they run themſelves and draw others into; and then we ſhall ſee what an abſolute neceſſity there is to put a ſtop to them, both for their own good and the good of the Church.

The Firſt this Gentleman tells us himſelf, p. 37. "They are truly guilty of Schiſm (the "word it ſelf bearing witneſs againſt them) "who break the precious Unity of the Chri-"ſtian Church.

They therefore that break the Unity of the Chriſtian Church either by enjoyning new Articles of Faith, or things ſinful in their practiſe contrary to the Doctrine and Practiſe of the Univerſal Church in its Primitive purity, are guilty of Schiſm, as the Romaniſts are, who (amongſt the reſt which are many more) enjoyn the Beleif of Tranſubſtantiation as an Article of Faith, which was never heard of in the Chriſtian Church for many hundred years, and the worſhipping the Hoſt as the conſequence of that Doctrine, together with Prayers to Saints, and the half Communion, *&c.* which are practices no leſs ſinful and novel then the former Doctrine.

Secondly, They are Schiſmaticks who ſeparate from that particular Chriſtian Church into which they were baptized, when it commands nothing that is ſinful in it ſelf; as all thoſe are who ſeparate from the Church of *England*.

For

For they can never excuſe themſelves from Schiſm, unleſs they can prove (which I challenge them to do if they can) that our Church enjoyns them any thing that is a ſin. but neither would this excuſe them from communicating with her in things lawful that are commanded by both their temporal as well as their ſpiritual Governours.

Now that Schiſm is a very heinous ſin is moſt evident, becauſe it is a breach of all thoſe commands of the Goſpel that enjoyn us Peace and Unity, then which I ſcarce know any more frequently repeated in the New Teſtament: and it will be moſt evident from the words of St. *Paul*, 1 *Cor.* 3. 4. For there the Apoſtle ſaith, that Schiſmaticks are carnal: For (ſaith he) while one ſaith, I am of *Paul*, another I am of *Apollos*, are ye not carnal? By which interrogation he doth moſt ſtrongly affirm it, and make themſelves the Judges in that Caſe againſt themſelves. From whence we may thus argue, That if the Apoſtle ſaith, that the *Corinthians* were carnal for dividing themſelves into Factions, and eſpouſing particular Names and Parties (though they choſe no other perſons then himſelf and *Cephas*, and *Apollos*) then thoſe that divide the Church into Parties, and eſpouſe particular Names and Perſons in oppoſition to the Church of God, into which they were baptized, and ſet up a Church within a Church, and par-

particular ways of publick worſhip contradictory to thoſe that are enjoyn'd by that Church, of which they are Members (without any juſt cauſe of ſeparation from her) are guilty of carnality by the judgment of the Apoſtle St. *Paul*, whatſoever their pretenſions are of piety in themſelves, or of powerfulneſs and godlineſs in their Teachers. And the greatneſs of the ſin of theſe perſons doth appear in that the Apoſtle calls them carnal; ſince the ſame Apoſtle (*Rom* 8. 6, 7.) makes any carnal ſin to be mortal and damnable. For to be carnally minded is death, and the Reaſon he gives ſufficiently backs it, for the carnal mind is enmity againſt God, *&c.*

Nay from Reaſon it ſelf I think that ſaying of St. *Cyprian* (*de Unit. Eccleſ.*) that the Schiſmaticks ſin is greater then the Apoſtates, may be made more then probable. For a ſin is ſo much the greater by how much more miſchief it does to the Church of God. Now the Schiſmatick may do more miſchief to the Church of God by drawing numbers of well-meaning Chriſtians after him, then the Apoſtate can. For all that are ſincere Chriſtians will avoid the latter, who cannot have ſuch plauſible and fair pretences for his renouncing the Chriſtian Religion, as the other may have for his Diviſions.

Let me now ask this Gentleman whether Schiſm is nothing elſe but an ordinary railing word

word in all Controverſies? But our Author will ſhift for one, I'le warrant him: his old Plaiſter of an erroneous conſcience will preſently cure his ſore; but he values not that, he hath a trick worth ten of it: and that is this Aſſertion, *viz.*

"That the Unity of the Church is not bro-
"ken by them who differ in Opinions; but
"by them who will not allow of ſuch a
"difference.

If the Author means only difference in Opinions in mens own minds, that never ſhews it ſelf by any different action from the Church, I know no body will oppoſe him in this Aſſertion. But if he means ſuch a difference of Opinions as do diſturb the publick exerciſe of Religion, by drawing others away from it, then he muſt charge the Apoſtle with Schiſm; for according to this Aſſertion how St. *Paul* will quit himſelf from Schiſm, I cannot tell; for he no where allows of ſuch a difference in Opinions, but doth with moſt earneſt zeal, exhort againſt Diviſions, and condemns them and their Authors as the moſt dangerous crimes and perſons: and yet who would ever have thought the Apoſtle a Schiſmatick? It is a little to be admired that St. *Paul* ſhould ſo paſſionately exhort us to peace and unity, and yet that he himſelf ſhould break the Unity of the Church. Again, this Aſſertion is altoge-

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ther new and senſleſs, and juſt ſuch another as this, That,

The Unity of a Family is not broken by the malepertneſs and obſtinacy of thoſe Servants and Children, that will not obey and ſubmit to the Orders in it, but will ſet up Orders for themſelves; no, by no means but onely by the pride and peeviſhneſs of the Maſter of the Family, who will force them to obſerve his Orders, and will not let them alone to do what they pleaſe.

For the future therefore, let Governours of Societies and Maſters of Families learn of this Author to give all their Subjects and Servants a free toleration to follow their own inventions, leſt they be guilty of breaking the precious unity of their Societies and Families.

Would it not be a brave world would they all but follow this advice? Oh what an admirable peace and harmony would then bleſs us!

Yet this is the natural conſequence of this Gentlemans Doctrine. For however he talks onely of a liberty of Opinions, this is but a copy of his countenance; for it is a liberty of practice according to thoſe Opinions that he pleads for; as moſt manifeſtly appears by his following Diſcourſe. For thus he argues, *p.* 37.

"Who knows whether that God who "liked beſt that no mans body ſhould have "the ſame complexion, *&c.* may not as well

"well be pleaſed with variety in his worſhip "and adoration?

I anſwer, Every body knows it that knows any thing of the Chriſtian Religion. Since we know that the Apoſtle prays that we may *all glorifie God with one heart, and with one mouth*, (*Rom.* 15. 6.) we muſt know that it is Gods will that ſuch an Unity ſhould be preſerved in his Worſhip. Since the Apoſtle beſeeches as well as commands us to *keep the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace*, (*Epheſ.* 4. 2.) and to walk by the ſame Rule, and to mind the ſame things, (*Phil.* 3. 16.) and that all things be done in decency and in order, and to edification, (which is impoſſible without Unity) we muſt then neceſſarily know that he is not pleaſed with variety in his Worſhip, as he is in the variety of his Works: and that therefore an orderly and uniform way of Worſhip is expected, becauſe we have commands of that nature.

But if this trick will not do, the Authour will ſhew you another as good, *viz.* "That "the Rule which God hath given us is capable "of various interpretations, whereas God "might have made them (if he had pleaſed) "as plain to every man in one ſenſe, as now "they are to every man in his own. But how do we know that, I beſeech you Sir? How could God have made them ſo? unleſs he had unmade man, and had made him an Angel incapable

capable of the leaſt errours. But what if the rule be capable of various interpretations and of all the three ſenſes he cites the Divines for? What's this to his purpoſe? Oh ſurely (quoth our Author) very much, for then we have no uniform commands, and conſequently there can be no neceſſity of an uniform Worſhip.

But Sir, (I muſt tell you freely) that you have as bad luck in conſequences in this Book, as I have ordinarily met withall. For Sir, may not, nay ought not the commands of God concerning his Worſhip, be interpreted in the litteral ſenſe; when they are ſo plain as nothing can be more plainly expreſſed according to the letter of them? What need any body have recourſe to the Typical and Anagogical ſenſe of thoſe words of the Apoſtles, *Let all things be done in decency and order, and to edification*, when they are ſo plain and perſpicuous in the literal; and ſo hardly admit of any other, that I believe it would a little trouble our Author, as well as all his Divines, to fix any Typical or Anagogical ſenſe upon them?

How then can this perſon have the confidence to inſinuate by little ſimilitudes, that the commands of God are as well obeyed by the various expreſſions of our adorations of him, as the Sun is obeyed by the contrary effects it hath upon the Mud and Wax, *&c.* (for this he muſt mean by all that diſcourſe, or elſe it is nothing to the purpoſe) when he muſt know,

(if

(if he believe the Gospel) that God hath revealed to us that it is his will, that we should glorifie him with one heart and with one mouth?

But perhaps this Gentleman thinks he knows better how to worship God, then God knows how to direct him. Oh the more then Divinity of *Humane Reason* that guides a man to think himself wiser then God Almighty! but our Author hath more of the same sort of similes, which are his grand Arguments, *Pag.*40.

"The Unity of the Church of God is not "compared to the Unity of one man: but "to the Unity of man and woman joyned "in marriage. Now this Unity is of one "part more weak then the other; and the "female part in the similitude is the erring "part in the Church, which is to be ac- "counted one and the same with the other "by the bond of charity.

Now what a fool was I! for I durst have sworn that the Apostle St. *Paul* doth compare the Unity of the Church to the Unity of the same body and its members, 1 *Cor.* 12. *v.* 12. to the end of the chapter, and this now in spight of *Humane Reason*, I must believe to be the Unity of one man.

But if we let that pass, what would our Author have from all this similitude? Upon my reputation I don't know. I wish he would tell me where he lives in his next Book, that I might

might wait upon his Worſhip, to know his pleaſure in it, for by what he hath here ſaid, I can onely gueſs at it. But I ſuppoſe his drift is this; That by vertue of this ſimilitude it appears that the erring part of the Church (though it be in actual and wilful errours) is ſtill a Member of the Church, and therefore not guilty of Schiſm. But I am very much miſtaken if I cannot convince any rational man of the quite contrary, and that from the very ſame ſimilitude.

For ſuppoſe the erring part in the Metaphor, *viz.* the Wife ſhould err and ſtray from her Husbands Bed to another Mans; and ſhould therefore be divorced from her Husband; who then (Sir) do you think would be guilty of the breach of the Unity in Marriage, the Man or his Wife? If you muſt be forced to ſay the Wife is guilty of it, would not the ſame thing hold in the erring part of the Church, *viz.* That if any ſhall wilfully run away from the Church, and diſobey its Laws, and Unite it ſelf to a quite contrary Aſſembly, that if he be Excommunicated for it, it is his own fault, and therefore he is guilty of the Schiſm, and not the Church?

I am almoſt quite tired with his Similitudes, his whole Book conſiſts ſo of them, as one would think he never aimed at ſolid Arguments, but onely at ſo nething like Arguments. For nothing can be proved by a ſimilitude:

they

they are at beſt but good Explications, but no Demonſtrations: But however, I muſt follow him.

To make ſhort work therefore with the reſt of them taken from the Members of the Body (which by the by I apprehend to be the Unity of one Man, though our Author but juſt now told us, that the Unity of the Church is not compared to the Unity of one Man) the ſum of all theſe Similitudes is nothing more then this, that if any Member of the Body be dead, or gangreened, or hath any infectious diſtemper that may indanger the reſt of the body, if it be not to be cured, it muſt be cut off: but if they be ſmall diſtempers (as the Itch) though very infectious, yet we will rather indure ſcratching the itchy part, then cut it off.

But what's the Reaſon I pray you Sir? is it not becauſe it may be otherwiſe cured, and becauſe if a Member be cut off from the Body, it cannot be ſet on again, and ſo the whole is thereby at a loſs for it?

Now apply this to the Church, and ſee what our Author will get by it. Thus, if any member of the Church be dangerouſly hurtful to the reſt, by groſs and ſcandalous crimes, it is to be cut off from it by Excommunication: but if the fault be ſmall, and not dangerous to the Church, it is to be born withall: but if the fault be never ſo ſmall, if it be very catching and dangerous to the Peace of the Church (as the

the itch of Diſputing and Writing againſt the Church's Authority is in theſe times we live in) ſuch a Member ought to be cut off. For though what he ſaith may be but little and very little to the purpoſe (as this Author's Book is) yet becauſe the contempt of Authority is a very great crime, and one of the moſt dangerous and infectious of this age, therefore ſuch a Member (our Authors own Similitudes prove) ought not to be ſpared: ſo that let the crime be never ſo ſmal, if it be accompanied with contumacy, the perſon deſerves Excommunication for it: Neither is the danger of looſing a Member ſufficient to reſtrain the ſentence. For it is not in the Body of the Church as in our natural Bodies, that the Member is quite loſt when it is once cut off, becauſe it cannot be joyned again.

For the Church after it hath cured the Member that was cut off, can reſtore it again ſafe and ſound to the ſame place it had before.

From whence we may ſee how deceitfull a way it is to argue from Similitudes. Wherefore this Gentleman muſt pardon me if I tell him that I cannot but ſuſpect a deſign of deceit in that Author, whoſe moſt common Arguments are Metaphors.

"Sixthly, The next Object againſt him, "he ſaith *p.* 44. Is Pride and Vanity. This he caſts off with ſo much contempt and ſcorn

ſcorn that he thinks (he ſaith) if he had not a great deal of humility he ſhould not daign to anſwer it. But ſuppoſe after all this he ſhould fail of an anſwer to it, (as he hath to all the reſt of the Objections) who then would ever believe Confidence hereafter for his ſake? Now if he doth not fail in it, I am ſure I am deceived. For his way of anſwering it is meer Sophiſtry, by comparing the extreams of both ſides, as though there were no difference at all, but onely in the two oppoſite extreams. But (I beſeech you Sir, is there no difference in *Humane Reaſon*, betwixt ſtaring and ſtark mad? does not true modeſty and humility conſiſt in a mean betwixt the extreams, as other Vertues do? Might he not as well argue, that becauſe it is a folly to ſtarve ones ſelf, that therefore it is wiſdom to be a Glutton and a Drunkard: or that becauſe it is Sedition to pay Authority obedience in nothing at all, or not in indifferent things, that therefore every good Subject muſt pay an actual and blind obedience to every thing his Magiſtrate commands him, though it be never ſo wicked and abominable?

Would not this be a very rational way of arguing? and is not this of our Authors exactly like it, if not the very ſame with it?

For whatſoever his words are, his meaning muſt be this (or elſe his diſcourſe makes nothing to his purpoſe) that becauſe it is pride and tyranny to endeavour to enſlave all mens un-

understandings by our own, that therefore it is humility to be governed onely by our own phantasies. Or that because it is a great crime in us Christians to damn all others that are not of our Opinion, that therefore we are bound to cast away all Laws, and let every man run on in his own inventions, and give a general toleration to Papists, Jews, Turks, Heathens, and Atheists.

Or lastly, because it is arrogancy in us to hold an Opinion, when cause shall appear to the contrary, that therefore it is humility in us to hold to nothing at all, but to be like a wave of the Sea tossed with every wind of Doctrine.

I appeal to any man living, whether he doth not think him more humble who submits to the Judgment of his Magistrates in all indifferent things (which is all that the Church of *England* requires) then he that is dogmatical in his own opinions about them, and onely rests satisfied (according to our Authors meek and humble Doctrine) in the sole dictates of his own *Humane Reason?*

And now, who does not admire our Authors great humility in vouchsafing an Answer to this Argument?

But these are the common Objections: Now follows the extraordinary one, objected by extraordinary Mr. *Hobbs*: He that pleaseth may read it, *p.* 46. for I am not at leisure to transcribe it.

The

The Seventh *Object.* is that of *T. H.*

"The ſum of which is this: "That becauſe "all publick Worſhip of God conſiſts in "outward ſignifications of our honour of "him, different ways of Worſhip muſt needs "be ſcandalous to others in making them "think that we diſhonour God in ſtead of "honouring him.

But this Gentleman diſſents from him. What pity it is that two ſuch extraordinary Friends ſhould fall out?

But let us ſee the Reaſon why he will contradict his old Maſter; and this it is.

"For the ſame Argument would as well hold "againſt the diverſe ways of Worſhip in ſe-"veral Commonwealths as in the ſame, be-"cauſe none would be ſpectators of the Wor-"ſhip but ſuch as believe it Honourable; for "were there an hundred ſeveral Religions "in the ſame City, ſtill their Religious Con-"gregations would be made up of none but "thoſe of the ſame Opinion.

I ſhall undertake to defend *T. H.* in his Aſſertion, not for any extraordinary opinion I have of the Man or his Argument, but becauſe I believe he ſpeaks truth in it; and therefore I think it hard that he which ſpeaketh truth ſo very ſeldom ſhould be run down with meer words or metaphors when he doth: but chiefly becauſe our Author through him ſtrikes at the injunctions of our Church and our Uniform

and decent Ceremonies in the worſhip of God.

But do you think (Sir) that men of the ſame City would be as much ſtrangers to the Religions of their next neighbours, as they are to thoſe of forraign Nations? Certainly I ſhould think that it was much eaſier for them to goa few ſteps to ſatisfie their curioſity, then to croſs the ſeas for it: and would not their trade and intereſt one amongſt another in the ſame town more oblige them to a religious interview, then when they were at ſome hundreds of miles diſtance, and had little or no concerns that ſhould draw them thither? Moſt probable it is, that to carry on a trade with all ſorts of men, ſome would ſo far comply with all ſorts of Religions, to go to all their publick Aſſemblies, ſince they might do it without giving themſelves the trouble of going further then the limits of their own walls. So that the caſe is much different which our Author would make the very ſame.

But our Author hath more Arguments then one, and more Anſwers too, or elſe he was in a poor caſe. He adds.

"That thoſe that are for a toleration of all "ways of worſhip in the ſame Common-"wealth would not think any of thoſe ways "which differed from their own to be dis-"honourable to God.

But (I beſeech you Sir) did they all tell you ſo?

ſo? or how do you know it, by inſtinct or new light?

But (Sir) if they had, I know no body is bound to believe them, any more then your ſelf. For I dare be ſo confident as to aſſert, that there is ſcarce any Sect in all *England*, unleſs they be Atheiſts, that do in their hearts allow of a toleration of all ways of worſhip in this Kingdome. Hath not this been made appear by all our grand Separatiſts? do the Papiſts allow it where they have power? did the Presbyterian or the Independant allow any ſuch thing when they were uppermoſt? and have not the Quakers themſelves ſet up a diſcipline amongſt them, which whoſoever will not ſubmit to, is preſently caſt out of the Brotherhood? ſo that we ſee our Author will find his own party very ſmall, when he comes to tell Noſes, unleſs he thinks he might find Atheiſts and Hypocrites enough amongſt all or any of the other Parties.

For otherwiſe it is abſolutely impoſſible, that any man that is ſincere in the choice of his Religion ſhould not think that way of worſhip which is contrary to his to be leſs honourable to God then his own (*i. e.*) comparatively diſhonourable to him.

For Inſtance. I do ſincerely chooſe to pray to God publickly on my knees, becauſe I do really believe that this is the moſt proper way of expreſſing (before thoſe men I converſe withall) that honour which I owe to God Al-

mighty: Now when I ſee others when they ſhould worſhip God, ſet on their tails *like Dogs, or wallow and loll, and grunt and groan* like Swine; or ſtand up and *wriggle and make ugly faces and grin* and make mows like Apes or Baboons. I muſt needs confeſs I cannot for my ſoul but think their way of Worſhip ridiculous, and contrary to the due expreſſions of the reverence they owe to the infinite God of Heaven and Earth.

So that this Gentleman muſt ſuppoſe, that all men in our Nation, or the greateſt part at leaſt, are meer Atheiſts or Hypocrites (which no man but he that is one of theſe himſelf can poſſibly ſuppoſe) or elſe that there muſt ariſe ſtrange thoughts of one another from their contrarieties in the performance of their Publick Devotion; and how ſoon theſe would break out into Diſputes, Contentions, and Feuds, and the Conſequences of theſe Tumults and Seditions, I leave it to any one to judge that is not prejudiced.

But if this Gentleman cannot carry his cauſe by Reaſon; he knows another way ſtill, and that is Railing.

And therefore he ſets full drive on the Clergy of the Church of *England* (they being now expoſed as the ancient Chriſtians were, amongſt the Beaſts in the Amphitheatres, without any guard but their own generous courage and innocence) he therefore ventures to give them

them the first Essay of his good natured and Gentile Doctrine, by very civilly calling them by those most obliging titles of Ignorant or Malicious Physicians.

For that he speaks of them is evident, because there are no other Spiritual Physicians (which he there must mean) but onely they that do publickly oppose his beloved toleration.

And is this all they have for their reward for setting themselves in the breach against that Flood of Popery and Atheism, which is just ready to overflow our Nation?

Is not this rare encouragement to our Noblemen and Gentlemen, to bestow a thousand or five hundred pounds in the Education of a Son to expose him (when all is done) to be abused by every Buffoon?

Is not our Nation come to a fair pass for Religion, that (though the most barbarous Nations in the whole World have an honour and reverence for their Priests, and always had so) yet that Sacred and Honourable Office amongst Us, must render the Person contemptible? I cannot but be concern'd (as I am a Gentleman, and so I think ought every one that bears that title) to see those who have, many of them by their Birth, all of them by their Education, Degrees, and Orders, merited a just title to the honour of the *English* Gentry; and that Profession which was in all

Ages (before this laſt) accounted in this Nation the moſt Honourable of all other, and is ſo ſtill accounted by our Laws, to be now become ſo deſpicable, that he paſſes for a Wit, that can but caſt an affront upon the Profeſſors of it.

For how can our Nobility and Gentry diſpoſe of their younger Sons (unleſs they will make the *Ottoman* Law to maintain their Families) when the moſt delightfull, moſt honourable, and formerly the moſt uſuall way for them, is blocked up by ſuch grand diſcouragements?

But what's the Reaſon now why this Gentleman treats them ſo Gentilely and civilly in the titles and in the faults he caſts upon them? onely this, becauſe (like good Shepherds) they will not deſert their Flocks which are committed to their care, to be devoured by the ſubtle Foxes of *Rome*, or by thoſe Wolves the ſacrilegious Atheiſts and Schiſmaticks of *England*.

Thus the Fox and the Woolf (had they this Author's *Humane Reaſon*, and his way of expreſſing it) would firſt endeavour to make the ſilly Sheep hate their Shepherds, by telling them how malitious they have been to them in reſtraining them from playing or feeding in what paſtures they pleaſed, and then tell them that if they would follow them, they ſhould have a general liberty of conſcience to do what they pleaſed. But what would be the event

ſhould

ſhould the Sheep ſtray from their Shepherds, to go along with theſe good natur'd guides? would they not all ſoon be devoured, without any body to help them? and would they not ſoon find by their ſad experience that it had been much better for them to have continued under the reſtraint of their old plain honeſt Shepherds, then to have enjoyed for a few minutes their liberty which their new maſters flattered them withall, on purpoſe that they might devour them? aye but (ſaith this ſweet-natured Gentleman) they might by Writing, Diſputing, Preaching, and Living, &c. reduce the World in a ſhort time to its ancient, healthfull and natural temper. If the Author means the ancient and healthfull temper of Popery, or the pure natural temper of Heathenism, I am very much of his opinion, that (if toleration be once ſet up) the World will in a ſhort time be reduced to one of theſe.

For let the Clergy do what they could by writing, preaching, and living, *&c.* were they not defended by Laws, and the Nation guarded from thoſe ſwarms of Caterpillars that would be ſent from *Rome* to devour our Nation, I mean Prieſts and Friars to convert ſouls to pay the old Gentlemans *Peter*-pence, and the reſt of St. *Peter's* Patrimony, their preaching and diſputing would never be heard, but would be quite drown'd with the noiſe of Papiſts and other Diſſenters; neither would the piety of

their lives (were they Angels) be taken notice of amongst that croud of pretenders to it; who would all strive by outward shews of it (especially the Papists by their magnificent processions, and their specious pretences of Miracles which must necessarily take with the common people) to draw all mens eyes from the true English Clergy: unless it were those who were set as Spies over them to discover their faults and to divulge them, nay if they had no faults (which is not to be conceived of meer men) rather then the people should believe them innocent, they would invent stories and lyes enough of them to take away all their reputation.

For this, some of our Sects (especially the Papists) would think themselves bound to do, from the very Principles of their Religion; the main of which is this, to promote their cause by any means whatsoever. So that this Gentleman may be fully satisfied that without the restraints of Law or else the Sword, it would be impossible to maintain any settlement in Religion, but that we must necessarily be hurried into Popery, Atheism and all Confusion.

Neither let our dissenting Brethren flatter themselves with the hopes that they shall easily run down the Papists with the cry of Antichrist, Superstition, and Idolatry.

For as to the two First, They will easily re-

retort them upon their accusers, and will raise a far greater cry for themselves of Christian Peace and Vnity, of their Church its antiquity, universality, infallibility, and the most inexhaustible Treasure of Charity in her Pardon and Indulgences, by which the people shall be allowed underhand a toleration of all kind of debauchery, so that they will but make a leg to the kind old Doctor of St. *Peter's* Chair: And as for Idolatry, they will easily answer that by the effects of divisions in the words of St. *Paul, Rom.* 2. 21, 22. *Thou therefore that teachest another, teachest thou not thy self? thou that abhorrest Idols, dost thou commit Sacriledge?*

There can be then but one way that can possibly preserve us from Popery, without the present execution of our Laws, and that is a standing Army: but I believe most true English Gentlemen will think this Remedy little better then the Disease.

If it shall be answered that the Laws might be executed against Papists, but a Liberty allowed to all others: I answer, First, that this is very unequitable and severe; that those persons who suffered most of any (except those of the Church of *England*) for his Majesties Cause, should now he is return'd, be the onely Sufferers.

Secondly, That were others tolerated, it will be impossible to discover the Papists, who

will hide themſelves under their coverings; there being no ready ways of convicting them, but onely this, their not joyning with the Church of *England* in her conſtant publick Liturgy every Lords day, and in receiving the Sacraments with her three times a year, which can never be conſiſtent with the toleration of all other Religions amongſt us.

I refer it therefore (ſince his Majeſty hath commanded the execution of his Laws) to the ſerious conſideration of our Nobles and Gentlemen, whether they will chooſe to give themſelves the trouble to execute our Laws, and to enjoy their Proprieties under the protection of them; or whether they will turn their throats to the longeſt Sword; or ſubmit their necks to the *Roman* yoke, which our wiſe fathers thought too hard for them to bear?

For one of theſe muſt be endured, & it will in a ſhort time be paſt all help to prevent the two latter without a ſpeedy recourſe to the former. For if our Sectaries grow more numerous and ſeditious amongſt us, (as they may eaſily be managed into any thing, and as long as the world hath more knaves then wiſe men and honeſt in it, they ſhall not want managers) they will ſoon become altogether ungovernable without a Rod of Iron, ſo that things will ſoon come to that paſs, that no Laws ſhall be executed upon them without a ſtanding Army to compel them to obedience and ſubmiſſion.

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But to return to our Author; He proceeds, p. 49. to ſtrike at the root of *Thom. Hobbes* his Argument, by telling him plainly and truly that it is Falſe. Alas, poor old *Thom!* that ſo extraordinary a Friend of thine ſhould ſo affront ſo extraordinary a Perſon as thou thoughtſt thy ſelf! What no other Argument but the Scotch Argument againſt thee, that ready way of confutation of all Objections, *Bellarmine* thou lieſt? Certainly if *T. H.* be not dead already, the very ſence of this affront would kill him: and would it not grieve our good-natur'd Author to be the death of ſo extraordinary a Gentleman?

But however, he not onely ventures to ſay it is falſe, but endeavours to prove it too, to be falſe, that the Worſhip or Honour of God conſiſts in the opinion of others. Why? becauſe "then Idolatry for 4000 years had "been the beſt, nay the onely Religion.

But what doth this make againſt *T. H.* his Argument? Or what abſurdity follows from thence, unleſs this be one, that the Heathens were Idolaters? and if they were, who can help it? But ſuppoſe (ſaith our Author) I was the onely Chriſtian amongſt an whole Nation of Infidels, I ought not to refrain from the Chriſtian worſhip, which I grant him if he means the private worſhip of God: no (ſaith he) nor to hide and diſguiſe it for fear of ſcandal to the Infidels; but as to concealing it, he

he muſt pardon me. For I do not conceive why I am bound to throw away my life or eſtate to do no good, but harm amongſt thoſe I converſe withall; eſpecially in ſuch a Caſe as this is, when I can perform my duty in private more ſuitably to the commands of Chriſt. For he commands us when we pray to enter into our cloſet, *Mat.* 6. and he tells us, that God which ſeeth us in ſecret ſhall reward us openly. If I am herein miſtaken, I ſhould be glad if you would pleaſe (Sir) to give me better information.

But again, He foreſees that an obvious Objection would be raiſed againſt him from the cuſtoms of men, amongſt whom a ſalute contrary to the cuſtom of the place would be accounted an affront; As to put off ones Hat in the Eaſt (though I don't know where they wear any Hats amongſt the Eaſterns) and in the Weſt to keep it on before Princes. But (ſaith this Gentleman) the ſame reaſon would not hold as to the worſhip of God. For God knows the very hearts of men; and therefore needs not judge of them by their outward appearence.

This I confeſs hath fully anſwered the Objection, as to the private worſhip of God. For the liberty of which our Author needs not diſpute. For I know none of the Church of *England* will oppoſe him in it; our Parliament having by their late Act left every one to his liberty in the performance of religious Duties

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in his own Houſe: But that he argues for, muſt be a liberty in the publick worſhip of God; and this if our Author had conſidered, would have quite alter'd the Caſe, and have fully ſatisfied him that his anſwer to this Objection is altogether vain and frivolous. For the worſhip of God admits of a double conſideration, if it be barely conſidered as the worſhip of God, then it is true that becauſe God knows the thoughts, the ſincerity of our Souls is apparent to him, without any outward expreſſions at all. But if we conſider it as publick, it is the worſhip of God in ſuch a manner as may not onely be known to God but to men; and therefore in that we are bound to uſe ſuch outward Ceremonies (*i. e.* expreſſions of our reverence) as are publickly known to expreſs and ſignifie our honour to God, that we practice that of our Saviour, *Mat.* 5. *Let your Light ſo ſhine before men*, &c. therefore as it is a worſhip of God, it requires our ſincere intentions to glorifie him by it; and as it is publick, it requires that thoſe ſincere intentions be expreſſed by ſuch geſtures and ceremonies as are known to expreſs our intentions of honour, not onely to God, but to all men that are preſent with us.

So that (whatſoever our Author ſaith to the contrary) it is not falſe of publick worſhip (concerning which he knows well enough that *T. H.* there ſpeaks) that it doth conſiſt (ſo far as it is publick) in the opinions of men.

Bu

But (ware thy gray pate old *Thom.*) for now he comes with his Similitude (his main ſtrength) that he may at one blow knock down all oppoſers, the ſum of it is this, *viz.*

That "As an Univerſal Monarch, though "he would be willing to propagate his own "Language, yet cannot be diſpleaſed at him "that pays him honour in a different Lan-"guage, and would at leaſt pardon that di-"verſity that conſents in his own glory. So &c. *p.* 51. &c.

In good time. But ſuppoſing this Emperor had commanded that none ſhould approach his preſence, or ſpeak to him, but in his own Language: would it not be a piece of very great humility in a Subject, to come and complement him in a different language (eſpecially when the Language that the ſupream power had commanded was the natural Tongue of that Subject) do you think he would not have a great deal of reaſon to pardon the Subject for that affront to his commands? But ſaith the Subject, I know this command of Yours was impoſſible for all Your Subjects to obey. Becauſe all men cannot ſpeak that Language you have enjoined: therefore I hope your Majeſty will conſent to that which tends to your own glory: what anſwer do you think (Sir,) would be made to ſuch a Subject? would his Emperor think himſelf obliged to him for his great civility? or would he not ratherwiſe puniſh him for his impudence,

pudence, in daring to break his commands before his face? for (though perhaps those of other Nations could not speak the Language, and so might be excused) yet this can be no excuse to him, whose native language it was supposed to be.

Apply this Similitude to the present business, and see what this Author will gain by making true comparisons.

God hath commanded an Unity and Agreement in his Publick Worship; the particular Magistrates of our Church and Nation, who are God's Vicegerents, to preserve this Unity; appoint those Ceremonies that are most expressive of reverence in the place where we live, and no other to be observed in the Publick Worship of God. Now can any Member of our Church pretend any impossibility for not performing this command? or does he think that this shall excuse him, because it is impossible for all other people of all the nations in the world, that do not know them, to observe those same Ceremonies?

Or lastly, do we think that he ought to be excused for his contempt of authority, because the different Ceremonies which he used in God's Worship did agree and consent in God's Glory?

For what he saith (p. 53.) *viz.*

"That as well may different thoughts re-
"present the Worship of God and his Son
"Jesus

" Jeſus Chriſt, as different words can repre-
" ſent the ſame thought.

I cannot tell what he would have by it. But this I know, take it in the litteral ſence of it, it is as extravagant an aſſertion as one can eaſily meet withall. For different words may ſignifie the ſame things, becauſe neither the things nor mens notions of things, do alter by the various words or languages in which they are expreſſed. But it is impoſſible it ſhould be ſo in the Worſhip of God. For the Worſhip of God being eſſentially placed in the thoughts, different thoughts muſt make different Worſhips. But perhaps this is to be typically or anagogically interpreted.

As for that laſh he gives the *Roman* Church, *p.* 53. The old Gentleman of the infallible Chair may well pardon him for it, ſince he makes him amends very ſpeedily after, *(p.* 56.*)* by drawing in *Henry* the Eighth by the head and ſhoulders, firſt to be laſhed for his Adultery, and then for deſerting his good old friend the Pope.

The laſt Object. He anſwers (from *p.* 54. to *p.* 62.) Is that by which ſome would prove him guilty of the Error of the Greeks by ſeveral Texts of Scripture.

The Error of the Greeks, I ſuppoſe was this. Their following vain and Heathen Philoſophy (or meer *Humane Reaſon*) againſt the Divine Reve-

Revelation of the Christian Religion, by the Miracles and Preaching of Christ and his Apostles. For from hence was it, that the Doctrine of the Resurrection was derided amongst them, that the Apostles Preaching was thought foolishness, and the Cross, a stumbling-block.

Now I appeal to any judicious and impartial Reader, whether this Author hath not driven on this same, or a worse design in no small part of his Book.

For he hath endeavoured to prove, that a man may be excusable, though he follows his *Humane Reason* to the denial of Christianity, (*i. e.*) in a direct opposition to the Divine Revelation. Nay he hath endeavoured to prove, that Jews, Heathens and Atheists, are in an equal possibility of salvation with the unerring Christian.

Now I desire this Author to prove, that ever the Heathen Greeks had amongst them any question which they did defend more directly contrary to the Christian Religion then His is? Which if he cannot do, he must acknowledge that he hath out-done them all at the wisdom of enticing words, to draw others from Christianity: and that he doth not come far short of them at the wisdom of the flesh, and the wisdom of the Princes of this World, will appear in that he hath so much busied himself to prove, that *Humane Reason* may tolerate Atheism it self, and consequently all kind of

lusts

luſts and wickedneſs whatſoever.

Away with you dull Greeks for a company of old fools, that could not improve your reaſon further, then to the denial of Chriſt! meer Gregory-grey-beards are you all, in compariſon of our Author, who can tell you preſently how to deny the Being of a God by *Humane Reaſon*, and to excuſe your ſelves when you have done; ſo exquiſitely hath he found out a guide to happineſs, and ſo gentilely hath he followed the directions of his own *Reaſon*.

The Gentleman in the next place proceeds to eſtabliſh his Doctrine by poſitive Arguments.

And his firſt Argument is from the ſafety of it, which he endeavours to prove by comparing his guide (*viz.*) every mans own *Reaſon*, with others that ſtand in competition with it.

"As firſt with the apprehenſion of a Viſion "or Revelation extrinſecally coming into "the Soul. p. 62.

If he means nothing but Enthuſiaſme hereby, I ſhall onely leave it to be diſputed betwixt him and his gratefull friends the Quakers. For I know no Chriſtian that will follow or expect new lights, ſince God hath given us the Goſpel, a poſitive law to govern our lives and actions; and ſince the Apoſtle tells us, *Gal.* 1. 8. *That if he, or an Angel from heaven ſhould preach any other Goſpel, he ought to be held accurſed.*

If he means all revelation in general (even that

that of the Gospel not excepted, as what may not a man venture at, who is indued with his *Humane Reason*, which hath already taught him to excuse Infidelity and Atheism?) I desire him to consider, that since he himself hath proved in the latter end of his Book, that we have Reason enough to believe the Scriptures to be the Word of God; What strange kind of blasphemous aspersion he must cast upon the divine Wisdom, if he dares to assert that every mans own Reason is a safer rule to walk by, then that rule which God hath particularly revealed to us from heaven for that purpose. Unless therefore he can think our own Reason more infallible then the Reason of God himself, he must conclude, (if he believes the Gospel to be Gods Word, as he professeth to do) that it is much safer to follow that law which God hath been pleased to give us, then the law of our own Reason. For otherwise the Divine Revelation had been altogether vain and useless.

Secondly, The next guide he endeavours to prove less safe then *Humane Reason*, is Authority, *Pag.*63.

By which he hath not explained what he means, so that by this Discourse (since he hath no ways limited the signification of the word) we may justly judge he intended to set up every mans Reason as a safer guide then all Authority. His reason is this.

"For if that Authority prescribe truth, we "have

"have good fortune, and meerly good for-
"tune in our obedience.

But I pray you Sir, Are there not many truths that can be no ways made evident (or at leaſt not ſo evident as is convenient) but by the ſuffrage of Authority? as the diſtinction of perſons in the ſacred Trinity, the Deity of the Son, and of the Holy Ghoſt. For if the univerſal conſent of the Church in theſe points did not clearly prove, that thoſe Texts of Scripture which are urged for them, were to be ſo interpreted, it would not perhaps be ſo eaſie a matter to ſtop a ſubtile *Socinians* mouth by meer Scripture; and much leſs by meer Reaſon.

If we take Au hority in the other common acceptation of the word for lawful power; the Authors aſſertion is ſtill worſe, and much more falſe. For in all indifferent things and doubtful matters, the Authority of the Magiſtrate is to preſcribe to us, not our own Reaſon only: it being much ſafer for us to follow authority in thoſe caſes, then to be guided onely by our ſelves. So that, Sir, you ſee by this time that in moſt actions of our lives (for moſt of them do concern indifferent things) we have not only good fortune but good reaſon in our obedience to authority. Nay in ſome caſes (and thoſe not a few) authority is the onely reaſon of our aſſent; as in all matters of Fact the reaſon of our belief can be nothing elſe but the authority of the Witneſſes; and in all matters of hiſto-

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ry, the reaſon of our belief is not ſo much the reaſonableneſs or credibility of the thing that is related, as the credit and conſent of Authors, which is nothing elſe but Authority; from whence it is that we can prove the truth of the Scriptures themſelves: and if ſo, then ſurely it was very Chriſtianly ſaid of this Gentleman, that we have onely good fortune in our obedience to authority; for then we have nothing but good fortune for our belief of the Scriptures themſelves, ſince the Reaſon of it is only grounded on Authority. But he proceeds, *p.*64.

"That if it lead us into errour, we have "nothing to plead for our excuſe, for we "have nothing to ſay for our obedience to "that Authority."

Who would have thought it? have we nothing to ſay for our belief of matters of fact and hiſtory, if we be deceived in them? have we no excuſe for our ſelves? certainly any body but this Author would allow us a very conſiderable, nay a full excuſe of our errour from the teſtimony of the witneſſes; elſe our Magiſtrates are in a very hard caſe, who are bound to paſs ſentence, even in caſes of life and death, *Secundum allegata & probata* (*i. e.*) according to Evidence which they have from the Witneſſes.

But however, he is reſolved to prove it from the example of *Eve*, who pleaded the Authority of the Serpent, and yet was puniſhed. Did

ſhe

ſhe not deſerve it, ſince ſhe dared to believe the Serpent rather then God himſelf? Aye but

"*Adam* too was accurſed, becauſe he believed that which was figuratively one with him his Wife (as Members of the Church pretend to do the Church) rather then that which was moſt certainly and ſingly one with him, which was his own Reaſon, *Pag.* 64.

What a fine ſtory have we here? the Author might, if he had pleaſed, have made ſhort work, and have told us that *Adam* was accurſed for believing his Wife rather then himſelf. But then the pretty Simile had not ſo well brought in the Church, which this Gentleman was reſolved to drag in (as *Henry* the Eighth was drawn in juſt before) by the head and ſhoulders. For if ever any thing came in impertinently this does: For was there ever any Member of the Church that believed the Church for no other reaſon, but becauſe it was figuratively one with himſelf? if not, to what purpoſe was this parentheſis of the Church crowded in, in this place? unleſs it was to make all his admirers to caſt off their obedience to the Church. But if any be hereby perſwaded to it, they muſt be ſuch as are not able to diſtinguiſh between Reaſon and Impertinency. But to let that paſs, I wonder who told him that *Adam* was accurſed for believing his Wife rather then his own Reaſon; whoever he was, a *Scotch* man would

call

call him a merry Gentleman, that is in plain *English* a down-right Liar. For if our Author will believe the authority of *Moses* in the case (*Gen.* 3. 17.) he will find that the reason of his curse is there given to be no other, then because he had broken Gods Command, and had not obeyed his Authority; So that his crime was not that he had believed his Wife rather then his own Reason. For that Law was not a Law of Nature or Reason, but a meer positive Law of God. For (had not God particularly forbid it) it had been for all any reason to the contrary, as lawful for *Adam* to have eaten of that Tree, as of any Tree in all *Eden*: But the cause of his curse was this, that he followed his Wifes example and perswasion rather then the expres commands and threatnings of God. What does all this make against Authority? since *Adam* was accursed for not obeying the Divine Authority. Who would ever believe any Authority after so grand a demonstration against it fetched from *Adams* green Breeches?

As for what he saith, *p.* 65. of blinding our own eyes, *&c.* I only desire him to tell me whether he doth believe that we must never follow nor assent to Authority? If he cannot be so ridiculous to believe it, then surely our obedience and assent to Authority where it is necessary (as in most cases of our lives I have already proved it is) is not a blinding our own eyes, and a putting our selves into a greater probability

lity of not finding then of lighting upon the true paſſage to Heaven, as he would there inſinuate? For I muſt needs tell him, that his Book is nothing elſe almoſt but a piece of common Sophiſtry, *viz.* an univerſal concluſion from ſome few particulars, and this managed by hiding himſelf in general and ambiguous terms, little ſimilies, and ſly inſinuations exactly fitted to deceive the Vulgar, and thereby to deſtroy all Peace and Unity in the Church, by making them have ſo high an opinion of their own Reaſons, that is of themſelves (to which they are naturally prone enough; for the Fool is wiſeſt in his own eyes) that they ſhall ſoon ſcorn and contemn all Authority whatſoever, which he endeavours to inſinuate by the advantage of ſafety on the contrary part, p. 65. "Now contrariwiſe (ſaith he) they that "are guided by their own underſtanding if they "commit themſelves wholly to it) are as ſafe on "the left hand as on the right, as ſecure of "happineſs in their Errours as others are in the "Truths they happen to fall into.

Hath he not now diſcovered moſt apparently what he means by his *Humane Reaſon*? Is it not the very ſame with *Ralpho*'s New-light?

For as of Vagabonds we ſay,
That they are ne'r beſides their way;
What e'r men ſpeak by this New-light,
Still they are ſure to be i'th' right.

Sap-

Suppose then that any one should commit himself so wholly to his understanding, that he should by the Errors of it be led into Theft, Murder, Rebellion, Schism, Heresie, Infidelity, and Atheism it self, would not this man hereby, think you, be in a very safe condition? and would not God Almighty at the great day of Judgment be very well satisfied for the commission of all these crimes, with this answer, that the man did wholly commit himself to the guidance of his own understanding? or rather would not his own conscience tell him that he ought to have been better informed? and that he might have been so if he had not been so self-conceited of his own Opinions.

Did ever any man but this Author make such use of his *Humane Reason* to countenance all the Villanies in the World? For what mischief is there so great that a man may not be led into by committing himself wholly to the guidance of his own understanding, if it be not beforehand rightly informed and instructed? Now should we not have a blessed World were men as secure in these Errours that might lead them into all these Villanies before mentioned, as others are in their Truths? But further, should a man chance to prove, that in most cases of our lives we are secure, if we follow Authority, though we may err thereby; nay, though we err contrary to our own Reason: and that on the other hand, if we err by following

our own Reason against Authority, we are clearly left without excuse for our presumption. How then? what would become of the grand security our Author saith every man hath in being guided by his own understanding? Would it not thence be clearly proved, that Authority is a much safer Guide in those things then every mans own Reason? and yet (I think) what I have undertaken will neither require any extraordinary brains, nor pains to demonstrate. For is it not as visible as the Sun in our assent to all matters of Fact from the Authority of Witnesses, and in our obedience to Authority in all indifferent things? for in both these Cases (especially in the latter) he that errs with Authority may plead the Authority for his excuse: but he that errs against it, is quite left without any excuse at all.

For in all things indifferent in their own nature (*i.e.*) all such things which before any Humane Commands concerning them are wholly left to every mans own judgment, being neither forbidden nor commanded by God, if the Authority of our Governours doth intervene, and command that this indifferent thing shall be done, though we did think it more reasonable to be left undone; yet we must be bound in these Cases to obey Authority rather then our own Reason. For otherwise every mans Reason would be his Magistrate, and he should be onely bound to do that which is right

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in his own eyes and nothing-else. Would not our Authors Doctrine be very well fitted to the peace of all Society? and does not he deserve very well from the publick by doing what lies in his power to wheadle into the heads of his unwary Readers (which are the greatest number of men amongst us) that it is safer for every man to be govern'd by the Laws of his own Reason, then by the Laws of the Church and Nation, of which he is a Member?

But now suppose we should err in doing any indifferent things in obedience to our Governours, and that it had been really better that it had not been done, yet our obedience, though contrary to our own Reason should in this case excuse us. Whereas whoso errs in following his own Reason, contrary to the commands of Authority in indifferent things, is altogether left without excuse, either before God or Man; unless it be before this good-natur'd Author who is resolved to excuse him by half a Jury of Reasons: but I may justly except against every one of them; for there is none of them that is both honest and true.

First Reason is this. "There is no danger "of perishing where there is no disobedi-"ence, but without this every man may of-"ten err, the command of God being not "to find out Truth, but to endeavour the "finding it; for the Command is, *Search* "*and ye shall find*, p. 66,

Is not this pleaſant? For what was the end and deſign of this Command? onely that we ſhould turn Seekers and borrow *Diogenes* his Candle and Lanthorn, and go peeking about all our life time, that we might in ſearching have ſomething to buſie our ſelves about? or was it given us that we might find out Truth? If the latter was the end of the Command, then that which binds to the end, commands all the lawful means to that end. So that he which is to ſearch for Truth, is by that Command bid to make uſe of all thoſe means that God hath afforded him to the finding it out. Wherefore who ever faileth by the wilful neglect of any means he had for the finding Truth, is therefore inexcuſable. Now ſince Authority is the immediate and ready way by which we find out many Truths (as all matters of Fact and Hiſtory, on which the Truth of Scripture it ſelf doth depend) if any man being to ſearch for any Truths of this ſort, ſhall out of his own ſelf-conceit neglect all Authority (by which the matter was onely to be known) and ſhall ſearch onely by the Reaſon of the thing, would not any man conclude him to be juſt as wiſe, and juſt as excuſable, as he who being commanded to look for the Hare when the Dogs were at a loſs, runs to the next houſe and falls a pulling off the Tiles to look for her in the roof of the houſe. For might not this wiſe ſervant pretend as good a Reaſon to excuſe himſelf as our

Author

Authors wiſe Reaſon that he here alledgeth? For might he not ſay to his Maſter, Sir, your Command was not to find out the Hare, but onely to ſearch for it? Do we not think now that this man did very well obey his Maſters Command? and that he ought to be return'd an abundance of thanks for his pains? for alas poor Fellow! he did as he was bidden, he looked for the Hare: nay poſſibly he could give as good a Reaſon for the manner of his ſearch as any is in all *Humane Reaſon, viz.* that he that will find what is loſt, muſt ſearch as well where it is not, as where it is: ſo that he followed but his own Reaſon in the ſearch, and therefore if our Author was his Maſter, he would without doubt reſt very well ſatisfied with him.

Secondly, Our Authors next Reaſon, *p.67.* is this. "Becauſe we lay the blaſphemous accuſation of injuſtice upon God, if he puniſh us for an Errour, that we could not avoid.

Theſe are his words: But I ſuppoſe it ſhould be thus (if we ſay that he puniſheth us for an Error we could not avoid) for if God Almighty doth really puniſh us for ſuch Errors, then it could be no blaſphemy in us to ſay ſo, neither would it be any accuſation of injuſtice, but onely a declaration of the plain Truth.

But what man ever ſaid ſo, that underſtood what he ſaid, that God will puniſh us for Errours

rours that we could no ways avoid? What then is this Reason to the purpose? Oh! very much, saith he. For are not all Errours such which we fall into after a full search for Truth, according to the best means represented to our understanding? I grant it; But if we do not rightly inform our understanding when it is in our power to do it; nay, if we shall neglect any of those means that God hath given us for our information, then our Errour will not be such as we could not avoid; and consequently without any injustice God may and will punish us for it. Wherefore he that shall out of wilful pride neglect Authority or Revelation in searching for Truths that are most properly found out by them, does not use the best and most proper means that God hath given him to that end; and therefore may as justly be punished for his folly (though he may think he follows his own *Humane Reason* in the search) as that Servant did deserve to be well rib-roasted by his Master for searching for the Hare at the top of the House, because he did not look for her in the proper place to find her.

The third Reason, p. 68. "Because we ought "not to believe Errours of faith to be dam-"nable.

But if these Errours be fundamental and obstinately continued in, against plain means of conviction, in opposition to authority; in spight of our Authors Reason, I must believe them dam-

damnable. Oh! no (saith he) for this is most wildly uncharitable: but why so? because this was to damn millions of men, for one that shall be saved. But this damns none but such as wilfully and obstinately continue in their errours, and thereby become Hereticks; nor them neither, for it is possible they may live to repent and amend: but if they die in heresie, that they die in damable sins, we must believe, if we will believe either St. *Paul*, *Gal.* 5. 19, 20, *&c.* who reckons up Seditions and Heresies amongst the rest of the Black Catalogue, which shall shut out from the Kingdom of Heaven; or S *Peter*, who plainly tells us, that there are damnable Heresies, 2 *Pet.* 2. 1.

Now if this be contrary to charity to assert, I cannot help it, I have very good company in my uncharitableness; for S. *Peter* and S. *Paul* are both guilty of it as well as I. Oh uncharitable Apostles! that had no more pity, nor love, nor compassion in you to those millions of dissenters that were hereticks in your time, but that you must not onely believe, but pronounce the Errours in faith of the greatest part of the World to be damnable Heresies! even shift for your selves good Apostles, for this Author hath charged you home with wild uncharitableness.

His fourth Reason, *Ibid.* and *p.* 69.

"We ought not to teach men that any Errours in belief overthrow our hopes of salvation, unless we could give them a cata-

"logue of those Errours that do so.

But why? Because this would be more uncomfortable then the other is uncharitable, for it would necessarily lead men into despair.

What then? Must we teach them to throw away their Bibles, and renounce all the Articles of the Christian Faith, and wholly to commit themselves to the guidance of their own Reason, (as our Author seems to do, *p.65.*) and that then they shall be safe enough, and need not further trouble their heads with matters of Faith or Religion. No, surely there is a middle way which is plain for all men to walk in, which ought to be shewn them; (*i. e.*) this: That some errours of Faith are damnable, though not all; and we may easily give them a general Catalogue of what errours are so, by which they may judge of particulars.

Those Errours of Faith are damnable which are wilfully run into, and all such as are continued in, in opposition to the Authority of the Church perversly and obstinately: and thus our Author hath a general Catalogue of what Errours are damnable; let him make what use of it he can.

The fifth Reason, *p.69.* and 70. is this.

"Because we cannot know our fault, and "therefore have no means of repenting of it: "and consequently cannot expect pardon "for it; there being no forgiveness without "repentance, and repentance, impossible with-

"without knowledge of our fault.

But if this be true, it would damn all mankind. For who is there that hath ever had a particular knowledge of all the sins that he hath committed? so that there must be many of them according to this Gentlemans reason, unrepented off, and consequently unpardoned. What's become of this Gentlemans great charity which he hath always boasted of? for this opinion is much more uncharitable then any of those whose uncharitableness he hath so much declaimed against. But (thanks be to God) this is not true. For sure we are, *David* doth repent him of those faults which he had no knowledge of, *Ps.* 19. 12. in that Prayer of his, *who can understand his errours? cleanse thou me from my secret faults.* By which the Royal Prophet must mean such faults as he himself had forgotten, and had no knowledge of; else the first part of the verse, which is the reason of the following petition, could have no coherence with the latter, which is the petition it self grounded upon the former. Besides, Why can we have no knowledge of our fault unless it be committed against our own Reason? For though we err only against Authority, and are for a time blinded with prejudice, so that we cannot at present see our errour, is it not possible that the prejudice afterwards may be removed, by a due information from others, or by our own serious consideration assisted by the Grace of God? If

it is poſſible, then there is nothing of truth nor conſequence in this Reaſon.

His ſixth Reaſon, p. 70. is this.

"The great probability of truth on all ſides, "even the erring ones, ought to make us be- "lieve that God will not puniſh thoſe that "err.

To this I anſwer, If our errours be ſuch as are not the effects or cauſes of any ſin in us, we have no reaſon to think but God will pardon them: But if our errours are the effects of wilful ignorance, pride, or idleneſs; or if they have led us into ſchiſm and hereſie, and contempt of authority, then we can have no hopes of pardon without amendment, wherefore ſin being moſt commonly, either the cauſe or the effect of our errours, or both; it proves that there is no ſmall danger in them.

But there is no ſuch great danger from errours (ſaith this Gentleman) p. 71.

"For it is not conſiſtent with the goodneſs "of God to have made truth ſo difficult to be "found out, if he intended to puniſh the miſs "of it with eternal puniſhments.

To this I anſwer. That where the difficulty ſurpaſſeth the helps that God hath given us, we need not fear that God will puniſh us eternally for not finding out ſuch truths. For if they had been neceſſary to be known for our ſalvation, they ſhould have been ſuited to our capacity. But if we are wilfully ignorant of any neceſſary

truths,

truths, then it is not contrary to the goodness of God to punish us eternally for it, as well as for any other sin which we die in without repentance. For the same thing might as well be urged to free men from eternal punishment, for most other sins as well as this of wilful errour. For since it is so very difficult to flesh and blood, to abstain from those sins which profit and pleasure tempts us to, and so easie to run into them; nay since there is but one way of exact vertue, which is the middle way for those many hundreds that lead to vitious extreams; and (as he saith of truth) there is no certain mark set upon that one, to distinguish it from others; he may therefore as well think it inconsistent with the divine goodness to punish men eternally for their vices, as for their errours; since the reason is the very same in both.

But now supposing it was true (which he can never prove) that God would not punish us for our wilful errours, yet since the consequence of errours doth naturally lead us into the most damnable sins, it therefore behooveth us (if we tender our eternal happiness) to take care to preserve our selves from errour, which may be not only of dangerous, but of damnable consequence to us.

What then is the wisest way for the most of men, to guard themselves from these dangers?

This is a question well worth our consideration, if we think we have such souls in us, as

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are endangered by errour to be eternally loſt and miſerable.

What then muſt the common people here amongſt us (the greateſt part of which, have ſcarce reaſon enough to demonſtrate themſelves to be men) do to ſecure themſelves?

I anſwer. It is the ſafeſt way for them, to relie upon the Church, eſpecially in all matters of indifferency and of unneceſſary diſputes: and upon ſome of thoſe Guides which the Church hath lawfully called and authorized in all caſes of conſcience.

For ſince (as this Gentleman tells us) many, nay moſt of men, and the wiſeſt of men have erred (though they have had all the advantages to improve their reaſons, that this world could afford them) how ſhould any ordinary man, who is void of all helps but his own natural reaſon, dare to rely upon it alone, in buſineſs of ſo great concern as his eternal happineſs or miſery? Eſpecially, ſince he doth not think it convenient to rely upon it in buſineſs of leſſer concern, *viz.* That of his health or eſtate.

Now I appeal to all men, that in difficult caſes do conſult their Lawyer and Phyſician; whether they do not think it ſafer to rely upon their judgements, then to be governed only by themſelves? they muſt ſay they do ſo, elſe they were mad to conſult them, and give them mony for nothing. So that this Author hath the ſuffrage of all wiſe men againſt his opinion, when he tells

tells us that upon the account of ſafety, we ought to commit our ſelves wholly to our own reaſon in the ſearch of truth. Nay I will refer it to himſelf, and challenge him upon his reputation (if he hath any left) to tell me whether his own practiſe doth not contradict his opinion? that is, whether or n he conſults his own reaſon, and commits himſelf wholly to the guidance of it, in caſes that concern his life and eſtate, or whether he is guided by the Doctor, and the Barriſter?

To this perhaps he will anſwer, that he limits his diſcourſe to the ſerch of Religious truths, in which it is moſt ſafe for us to rely upon our own Reaſon.

But I pray you, Sir, why not then in all other? can you ſhew me any cauſe of difference? If you ſay becauſe Religion is grounded upon probabilities, I Anſwer, ſo is Phyſick upon much more uncertainty then Religion; and the Law is no leſs built upon uncertainties in many caſes which have not been determined by preſidents. But ſuppoſe that religious matters are more intricate and obſcure, and leſs certain then other things; ſince errours in Religion are no leſs dangerous to our Souls, then errours in Law and Phyſick are to our Eſtates and Lives, (if we believe we have any ſouls) We ought then to be more carefull to conſult our Guides of Conſcience, then we are to take advice of our Lawyer or Phyſician. But experience

ence and practise is the best teacher.

Let us now suppose every private person to be wholly committed to the guidance of his own reason (according to this Author's Doctrine) and let us see what safety he enjoys thereby.

For then supposing he meets with a cunning Gentleman from *Rome* (that hath been brought up in all advantages of Learning and Education) that should baffle his reason for the defence of Protestantism, then if he will act rationally he must presently turn Papist; and so *vice versâ*. The same thing would also hold if he should be baffled by any Jesuit, under the disguise of any other Sectary whatsoever: for he must so often change his Religion as he meets with more crafty Disputants than himself. By which means he might every hour have a several religion; and change so often till at last he had quitted all religion and turn'd Atheist, which we see to be the ordinary consequence of frequent changes. Nay further, suppose he meets with some subtle Jesuit in disguise (whose business it is to convert men, first to debauchery, then to Atheism, and so by degrees to Popery) who should baffle all his reasons for the practice of vertue, nay for the immortality of his Soul, and for the being of God (as it may well be supposed where there is so great a difference in the advantages of the persons) What then will become of him, if he commits himself only to the guidance

guidance of his own reaſon? he muſt then preſently commence Brute, and believe that he hath no more ſoul then his horſe or any other beaſt, and that he ſhall die and periſh like one of them: nay he muſt turn Atheiſt and not only deny the Lord that bought him, but that God that made him, and ſo be left altogether without any excuſe. Is not this perſon now very ſafe (think you) under the guidance of his own reaſon? If therefore it be ſafe for us to run into Popery, Hereſie, and Atheiſm, let us follow our own Reaſons, and wholly commit our ſelves to our own guidance: if not, Let us follow the Church of *England*, and thoſe guides which ſhe hath ſet over us in all difficult caſes, of which we our ſelves can be no competent judges; and when we are preſs'd with any argument for a change in our religion (which we are not able to anſwer) let us repair to our own lawful Miniſter, or to ſome other that ſhall direct us, for a ſatisfaction of our doubts and objections.

And though this may ſeem a Paradox in this Age of Schiſm and Faction; yet the relying on the Church is the very ſame direction that St. *Paul* gives, 2 *Tim.* 3. 15. where he calls the Church of God, *The pillar and ground of truth.* For if ſo, then all that are Chriſtians, ought to rely upon this pillar, and to build their faith upon that which is the ground of truth. But I know he there means the Univerſal Church.

But

But you'l say, how should I (who am an illiterate person, or a private Gentleman, and understand not the languages in which the Scriptures and other Church-writings are pen'd) know what the Doctrine of the Universal Church is? for I am not able to search for the Christian Doctrine my self.

I answer, Read the Scriptures in English, and practise those things that are plain and easie in them: and as for difficult disputes either let them quite alone, or else consult in all difficulties the directions of your own Church, the Church of *England*, by those guides which she hath set over you. But may not these deceive me too, as well as my own Reason?

I Answer, It is probable that they whose business it is to study those things, must know them more certainly then I, who have never had time nor convenience to study them.

But supposing they should deceive me, as long as I am in this life, I shall always be subject to errour; and if I do follow these directions sure I am, it is their fault and not mine, if they lead me into errour; for I have done what I could to prevent it: and sure I am, I cannot this way be led into Popery, Infidelity and Atheism (as I may be if I wholly commit my self to the sole guidance of my own reason) since our Church hath so plainly guarded us against the Idolatry of *Rome* in its plain Homilies, and against Infidelity and Atheism by her full and short Catechism

chiſm, and by allowing us the uſe of the Scriptures. I dare confidently aver, that there is no ways in the world left for us that are unlearned, to keep us (without a miracle) from Hereſie and Schiſm, or Popery and Atheiſm, but only by this method that I have now laid down.

If I am miſtaken, I ſhall be very thankful to any one that will ſhew me wherein: If I am not miſtaken, I muſt deſire our Author to give me leave to think, that the Authority of the Church is a ſafer Guide to me then my own Reaſon: and conſequently, that all his boaſt of ſafety is nothing elſe but meer impertinence and falſhood.

Several things (it is poſſible) will be objected againſt this method which I have laid down for the ſafety of all private Gentlemen, and men of ordinary capacity, eſpecially for common people; which was this,

That every one ſhould rely upon the Church of England, *and thoſe Guides of Conſcience which ſhe hath authorized in all difficult caſes and doubtful matters, which ſurpaſs his own abilities to judge of.*

Againſt this it may be objected. Firſt, That this is to run into the ſame implicit Faith which we condemn in the *Romaniſts*; and put out our own eyes that we may ſee with other mens.

I anſwer, Not at all: for I allow every one the free uſe of the Scriptures and their own Reaſons in all matters that are within the reach of their

their capacity, and within their proper ſphear of Action: and for all others that are above them, I have ſhewn them (I am ſure) the ſafeſt guide I can poſſibly find. If any body can produce a ſafer let them, and they will do very good ſervice to the publick.

Secondly, It may be objected, That by this Direction, they that are Papiſts (eſpecially the common ſort of them) are in no poſſibility to be freed from the *Roman Yoke*; and conſequently muſt continue in Idolatry, and therefore in moſt imminent peril of damnation.

I anſwer, I gave not this direction to Papiſts, or thoſe that are without our Church; For what have I to do to judge them that are without? But to thoſe who are, or ought to be obedient Children of the moſt Chriſtian and tender Mother the Church of *England*; who is guilty of no corruption from the Primitive Chriſtianity, either in Doctrine or Worſhip; who enjoyns the Belief of no new Articles of Faith, nor no Idolatrous Worſhip, nor commands any thing that is ſinful to be obeyed; the contrary to which the Church of *Rome* is moſt apparently guilty of.

Now I refer it to any man, or to all mankind to judge which is the ſafeſt way for us of the Church of *England*; whether to perſwade all of our Communion to be governed by their own Reaſon, and ſo to endanger the loſs of the greateſt part of them that are now free (and muſt

must continue so, so long as they continue in obedience to our Church) from all fear of Popish Idolatry, and thereby to expose them not onely to all false Religions, but even to be of no Religion at all, for fear of using such Arguments to secure them, as might if us'd to ignorant Papists, continue them in their Errours and obstruct their conversion to our Church; of which we cannot have half so great a probability, as there is of losing, or at least hazarding their Souls, who now are not, nor never can be in any danger, so long as they continue in obedience to their own Church? or whether it is safer for them to be kept by Laws in the Communion of the Church of *England*, and in obedience to her Injunctions in all honest and lawful things, which is all that our Church requires even of the Clergy themselves.

Thirdly, Another Objection may be this.

That possible it is our Church may in time, as well as the Church of *Rome* (which formerly was a Church as free from all corruption as ours is now) degenerate into the very same Crimes which we now blame *Rome* for.

I answer, That then our Church must be quite altered from what it is at present, and I onely propose my Method of Safety to all illiterate Persons in Her present Communion; and therefore am not at all concerned for future contingencies. But if ever She should be changed from her Primitive Purity (which God

God forbid) then, and not till then, will this Objection deserve an Answer. For if possibilities of Errour may render Separation allowable, we must never be fixt in any Church, till we can come to that which is triumphat in Heaven: nay, neither can any man be free from a possibility of Errour as long as he is here on Earth, let him propose to himself what Guide he can: And I dare appeal to any man that is rational, whether he must not think that his own Reason may in all probability lead him into Errours much sooner then the Guides of the Church, especially in such things as he is not a capable Judge of. For surely every mans own Reason is much more subject to a possibility of Errors, then an whole Church is to a possibility of a total change and alteration. So that it must still remain much safer to rely upon the Church (according to the Rule I have laid down) then it is to rely wholly upon our own Reason.

4. The last Objection I shall answer is this.

That if we that are illiterate must rely upon our Church in all things above our capacity, that then we ought to have practised the same Rule when we were Members of the Church of *Rome*, and consequently ought never to have separated from it: and therefore that our Reformers were Schismaticks.

To this I answer, That the *Romish* Doctrine of Transubstantiation, and their Idolatry in wor-

worshipping the Host, &c. besides the Popes Usurpation upon our Regal Authority, was so directly contradictory to the Word of God that he must needs see it that doth not wilfully shut his eyes.

Secondly, Our Reformation was carried on not by Private Persons but by the Publick Power of the Nation, and by all the wisest and most learned Men in it. And consequently it could be no Schism, it being granted upon so warrantable a Cause, and done in so orderly a manner.

To conclude all this Discourse, Let all Circumstances be impartially considered as they are now in the Church of *England*, and I dare refer the Question to the Writer of *Humane Reason* himself, whether it is not a much safer way (for the common People especially) to relie upon her judgment, then upon their own? And whether it is safer for the Publick to maintain the established Religion by the execution of our Laws, or to let Hell break loose amongst us by a general Toleration of all Religions, and by consequence of all debauchery and Atheism, I refer to our Government to consider.

Now for our Authors next Argument by which he would prove his Opinion to be most natural; if he had said purely natural, we might well have granted it him; for it is as foolish an one as one would wish.

The Argument is grounded upon a pretty similitude (which our Author loves as dearly as

as he doth his Mistress) they that have a mind may read it at length, p. 72. to the 78. for I have something else to do then to bestow time to transcribe it.

The sum of it is this, *viz.*

"That as in all visible Objects we appeal "to the eye and sense of seeing; and make "no appeals from it, either to other senses, or "to revelation,: so in all rational Objects "we must have recourse onely to our Reasons, "and must in no case appeal from thence; "and especially in matters of Religion. For "Religion was the main design of mans Crea-"tion.

But now if in visible Objects there is an appeal to our higher faculties, then (by vertue of this Gentlemans own Metaphor) there may and ought to be an appeal from our Reason even in rational Objects to some more certain Judge where it may be had.

That there is such an appeal in visible Objects from our sense of seeing to our nnderstanding, is evident in all those Cases in which either the Eye or the medium is defective or disturbed, as he himself doth acknowledge, p. 74. to which I need add but this one Instance. The Stars appear to our eyes to be no bigger then the Nails in the Spoak of a Cart-wheel, though they are (as Astronomers do demonstrate) vastly greater then the whole Earth. Now then it is as clear as the Sun that there must

must be an appeal from our ſenſes, otherwiſe we muſt believe that the Stars are very inconſiderable things, and that the Sun it ſelf is no bigger then a Buſhel; becauſe we ſee them appear of no greater Dimenſions.

From whence there can be nothing more evident then this. That as in viſible Objects the Soul can make no certain judgment when the Senſe is diſeas'd or defective, or the Medium is diſturb'd; and that as when the appearance of viſible Objects to our Senſes doth contradict our rational Faculties, we believe our Reaſon rather then our Eyes: ſo our Souls can paſs no certain ſentence concerning intelligible things when her underſtanding is any ways diſturb'd, and when the Object is too high for our Reaſon; and that we ought therefore to appeal from our Reaſon when it contradicts any higher and better Demonſtration, particularly when it ſeems to contradict Divine revelation, becauſe we muſt be aſſured that the Reaſon of God is much more certain and infallible then the Reaſon of man, unleſs *Humane Reaſon* teacheth us to think our ſelves wiſer then God.

So that from this Metaphor (if ſimilitudes may paſs for Arguments, as they do with our Author, who ſcarce uſeth any other) it follows that as in viſible Objects we muſt not always believe our eyes, ſo neither in intelligible Objects muſt we always believe our Reaſon.

Where-

Wherefore all that this Gentleman hath got by this Argument, is, That he hath made a Rod for his own Breech. For he hath hereby fully demonſtrated the folly of his whole Book; for the Reaſon of moſt men being depraved and blinded with prejudice and paſſion, ignorance and intereſt, is no more to be believed then the eye that is diſtempered with the Jaundiſe or any other Diſeaſe; and therefore that is a madneſs for moſt men to give themſelves up wholly to the guidance of their own Reaſons.

Nay it further follows from hence, that as he would be thought a mad man, or at leaſt a very pragmatical fellow, who will believe his own eyes againſt the teſtimony of thouſands of others, who have greater advantages of ſeeing the object then himſelf; ſo he muſt be thought very pragmatical, if not mad, who will believe onely his own Reaſon againſt the judgment of thouſands of others, who are all wiſer then himſelf: he then muſt be a pragmatical fool that will believe his own Reaſon when it contradicts the Univerſal teſtimony of the whole Church. So that our Authors ſingularity in renouncing all Authority (his own Argument proves) is a piece of the greateſt pride and folly.

Now, Sir, you ſee how eaſie it is to retort your little ſimilies upon your ſelf; and what a great advantage you gain to your Cauſe; by making true compariſons of things. I do believe your wit is good, but your luck is ſtark

naught

naught at similitudes: since therefore they have proved so unlucky to you, let me advise you as a friend, not to use them any more for demonstrations; and then I am very confident that the world will not be troubled with any more of your scribling.

But now let us suppose our Author's consequence to be good, and his metaphors to be demonstrative; and let us but observe the natural tendency of it; and if that will not be sufficient to demonstrate the danger and folly of his opinion, I know not what can.

For if because God hath given us our reason to be our guide, in all intelligible matters, and consequently in matters of Religion (as he hath given us our eyes to guide us in all visible objects) and that therefore there must lie no appeal from our reason in any matters of faith or religion; why then doth it not hold in all matters of Law and Justice?

I challenge him to shew me any reason if he can, for is it not the office of our reason to guide us as well in all other matters, as in the concerns of religion? and yet surely there is no man (unless it be this Author) can be so senseless to think otherwise, then that he which lives in a society must submit the external exercise of his own private reason to the publick laws, or else that he ought to be cast out of the protection of that society, and to have no benefit of those laws, which he will not submit to: and yet is it

not natural for every man to govern himself by his own Reason in every particular concern and action of his life as well as in Religion? Must then our Governours out of pure good nature cancel all our Laws, and give every man leave to follow the guidance of his own Reason alone in all things, because it is most natural to every man to be so guided? What an unnatural Parliament have we, that will hang men for Stealing or Murder? for hath not Nature given every man hands to take such things as he hath need of? and why should he not kill any man who opposeth him in making use of his natural right to preserve his life?

Thus our Authors natural Argument serves in its direct consequence to dissolve all society, and to destroy all Law and Right: or else to demonstrate himself to be a meer Natural, in not seeing the so obvious and pernicious consequence of it; or something worse if he did see it, and yet dared to insinuate it by little similies into the fickle heads of the self-conceited multitude. But perhaps it was onely pure good nature in him. For is it not a great deal of pity that men should be restrained from the free use of that which is so natural to every one, as is his own Reason?

But I cannot for my life imagine what should put our Author into so sudden a Fit of good nature; for (if I am not deceived in the person) the Gentleman is not always guilty of it:

it: certainly there was some particular cause for it at present, and perhaps it was this. To draw in the Women for Toleration, that so they might draw in the men. For,

So Indians draw in the Female
Elephant, t'inveigle the Male.

And one good turn requires another; so that those kind souls of that Sex that know themselves apt to mistake another man for their own husband, are extreamly obliged to this Gentlemans *Humane Reason* and good nature, and therefore they ought to be of his Party; for he hath most effectually and demonstratively pleaded their cause. For when the good man peeps through his horns and sees something that makes them begin to stand on an end for anger at his Wife, she need but onely tell him that she did but make that natural use of her parts, which her own Reason did dictate to her, and that she truly knows no reason to the contrary, why she might not make that natural use of her tail to get a livelyhood by, as well as others do of their hands or their tongues; and the poor Cuckold must rest fully satisfied with this answer of his wife, and put his horns in his Pocket, and sneak away for fear of being accounted an irrational Coxcomb, for not understanding *Humane Reason.*

I wonder now, that all the Whores and Rogues, as well as the Quakers, did not come and return this Author thanks for his Book.

It is a great deal of pity they did not; What a goodly company of Friends would there have met together! and how lovingly would they have greeted and embraced one another with the close hug!

Now I have done with this Gentlemans Naturals, and must proceed to take a view of his Politicks, and it would be very strange if these should not be as like the former, as ever any Child was to the Parents.

His third Argument, p.78. is this:

"That it is likewise most agreeable to the "good and interest of Humane Society, for "all Wars of late Years have been either real-"ly for Religion, or at least that hath been "one of the chief pretences; which if it were "quite taken away, the people could not "thereby be drawn into a civil, or foreign "War.

Fare you well for a Politician.

What! must all Religion be removed out of the World? Surely never any man in the heathen Politicks ever found such an assertion as this, much less amongst any that did but so much as pretend to the name of a Christian.

Neither is this assertion more contrary to Christianity, then it is to true Politicks.

For I dare undertake to demonstrate, that no other Principle whatsoever, onely Religion, can be the main support and foundation of Society: So that if Religion be removed, the Society must

must necessarily fall; and consequently, whoever endeavours to undermine and destroy Religion, is a publick enemy to all mankind.

For (setting aside Religion) there is no other Principle that can keep men good subjects, good children, or good servants: nay to go higher still, nothing but Religion implanted in the minds of men, can preserve Princes in their Thrones, or Parents or Masters in their Families. There can be but two Principles that can pretend to do it (that I know of) besides Religion, and those are,

First, Sense of Honour and Reputation.

Secondly, Fear of Laws and Temporal Punishments.

But that neither of these can do it without the help of Religion, will be evident to any man that will but allow himself a due consideration of it. For supposing all men were rid of Religion, then the grand Maxim by which they must rationally govern their actions, must be only their own present preservation and welfare; So that whatsoever makes for their present advantage, can be no ways dishonourable for them in their own thoughts; and as for a disesteem or dishonour from others, it would only oblige them to act their crimes in secret, not at all to avoid them. For if they did but act their Villanies (though never so horrid) so privately, that other men could not know them to be the Actors or the Authors of them, they

would thereby be ſecure enough from all diſhonour from their Actions. And as for the fear of Laws, the very ſame thing, *viz.* ſecreſie in their actions would equally ſecure them from the puniſhment of the Laws, as from diſgrace.

So that if I can prove that the horridſt murders may poſſibly be committed ſo privately, that the World ſhall not know the Authors nor the Actors of them (which is eaſily demonſtrable to him that conſiders how eaſie it is to be guilty of Perjury and Forgery; and that there are ſuch things as Fire, Poiſons, and Poniards in the World:) and that in moſt Kingdoms and Families mens preſent intereſt would incite them (had they no better principle to govern them) to the worſt of Villanies, even ſuch as would ruine all Government either of Nations or Families, it will follow, that neither ſenſe of honor nor fear of Laws, could keep men from them.

Now that mens preſent intereſt would prompt them to the murder of their Prince is moſt evident in the next heir to the Crown; for would it not prompt him to remove his Father, that he might aſcend the Throne, and ſway the Scepter, which he could not hope to do as long as his father lived? Neither could diſgrace keep him from this murder, if it was but done privately; and much leſs could fear of temporal puniſhments in the leaſt deter him from this horid murder of his Prince and Father, unleſs it were fear of thoſe that might be ſuppoſed

from religious Principles. For his Father is no sooner dead, but in all hereditary Monarchies the next Heir is actual y Supream; and therefore above all Humane Judicature of the Laws, and all corporal or capital punishments from his Subjects.

Neither would the Governours of Families be much more secure from their next Heirs, whose Interest would lead them to murder their Fathers, that so they might enjoy their Estates that would descend to them by Inheritance. Now (was there not a Conscience and secret dread of Religion that awed the minds of Children from the thoughts of so horrid Villanies) it would be too easie for those that live under the same roof, and have all opportunities of secresie in their crimes, to act any Villany so privately that their interest should lead them to, as that they should never without a Miracle be discovered.

But supposing they should be discovered, it is onely death which is the utmost punishment they can fear, which (according to the Atheists Principles) would be no such dreadful matter; for it would onely put an end to all those troubles and disquiets they here labour under.

Now that this would be the consequence that would ensue, if mens minds were free from Religious dreads, is evident from the practice of debauched persons, who have run themselves into Atheism. For we see they

ſtick not to hazard their lives daily for the ſatisfaction of their luſts by the perpetration of any Villanies (even Theft and Murder not excepted) for hopes of a very ſmall and inconſiderable gain in compariſon of that which the death of a Father would afford the next Heir: nay, we ſee that amongſt wiſe and ſober men, the Merchant doth expoſe his Life and eſtate to the moſt uncertain of all things, even the Winds and the Wave, for the hopes of a far more uncertain gain then this would be to the Heir: and the Souldier doth daily bid defiance to Death in the open Field, onely for the ſake of a poor livelyhood.

What then could preſerve our Houſes, Towns, and Cities from Fire, our Lives or our Eſtates from perjury, or our Perſons from poyſon and poniard, ot our Wives from abuſing our Beds, or our Neighbours from cheating us, was all Religion rooted out of the World? Would not a Commonwealth of Men be ſoon worſe then a Deſert of Beaſts, Reaſon enabling men to do more miſchief one to another, and to act it more privately and effectually then the Brutes? We cannot then but ſee by this time how abſolutely neceſſary Religion is to the good and welfare of all Mankind, and all Societies. Wherefore thoſe Gentlemen that delight to promote Atheiſtical Diſcourſes (ſorry I am to think this Age ſhould afford any ſuch of that quality) do expoſe themſelves to be

be thought Enemies to all Mankind by all wise men, and never to be trusted by any but inconsiderate Fools. Had they therefore a true sense of their own reputation, they would never be guilty of that gross folly, to say, *there is no God*; or openly to countenance Atheism.

I hope this Gentleman our Author hath no such Design, though by his excusing Atheism before, as well as by his words in this place he hath given me too much Reason to suspect it.

I pray God our Magistrates may take care to revive those Laws that may put a stop to the growth of Atheism amongst us, which they are obliged to do, even for their own present preservation, unless they can think it safe that our Nation should be quite overrun with such a sort of Villains, that will stick at nothing (though never so hellish a crime) when their present interest, or the satisfaction of some brutish lust shall prompt them to it. For if these grow numerous, they themselves will not be in a much safer condition then the meanest Subject. For they that once come to that heighth of madness to contemn their own lives and estates (out of Atheistical Principles) are Masters of the lives and estates of all other men.

Secondly; To come to something more directly in answer to our grand Politician. I must be forced to tell him (as he did his extraordinary friend *T.H.*) in plain English that it is

falſe; that Religion hath been ſo much as the pretence of all Wars that have been of late years amongſt us. Was it not a diſpute betwixt the Rights and Liberties of the Subject, and the prerogatives of the Crown, that was the firſt pretence of the late diſmal and unnatural War amongſt our ſelves, though (it is never to be forgotten that) Religion was afterwards drawn in to countenance Rebellion, even by ſome of thoſe very perſons that are ſtill Praters in unlawful Conventicles, and do (as far as they can) ſtill continue Leaders of Faction and Sedition?

Was it Religion or the vindication of our juſt Rights that was the cauſe, or ſo much as the pretence of our late Wars againſt the *Dutch*?

Is it Religion or Intereſt and deſire of Dominion that at this preſent ſets the greateſt part of Chriſtendome in a Flame, and cauſeth ſo much effuſion of Chriſtian Blood by the *French* Armies?

From whence nothing can be clearer then this, That it is Intereſt and Propriety, Right and Liberty; Power and Dominion that are the Cauſes and Pretenſes of Wars, not Religion. Shall we therefore (acrording to the Reaſon of our Author's grand Politicks) remove all Power and Dominion, and all Right, Liberty and Propriety out of the world, becauſe if they were removed, the people could never there-

thereby be drawn into a civil or forreign War? Are not the most necessary & the best of things always most ready to be abused, and the most destructive when they are so? Go thy ways Sir Politick! for if thou hast not deserved to be knighted for this Book, I believe thou art very much mistaken in thy own modest thoughts of thy self. What pity is it thou art not a Privy Councellour! Ingrateful age that will not raise him fifty Cubits higher then other men who hath well deserved it! certainly it is a great deal of pity that the Gentleman should not be preferr'd according to his Merits. *Plato* in his *Phædo* tells us that nothing drives us to fightings, wars and seditions, but the body and its lusts; And does not St. *James* (if happily he may be of any credit or authority with this Gentleman) tell us the very same thing? *James* 4. 1. *From whence* (says he) *come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your Members?* &c. So then all wars, brawlings, seditions, strifes, dissentions are raised and promoted not properly and truly for Religions sake (which does not, cannot, authorize or countenance any thing of that nature) but for the sake of mony, ambition, or profit, or some such like temporary, worldly and carnal consideration; and yet I suppose our Sir *Pol.* loves his body, his lusts, and his mony a little too well to have them removed out of the world, lest

leſt they ſhould be the cauſe of wars and ſeditions.

But ſuppoſing what he ſaith was true, *viz.* That Religion was really, or at leaſt in preſence the cauſe of all Wars, ſince I have demonſtrated it ſo abſolutely neceſſary to the peace of all Societies, what ought to be done with it? ought it to be removed out of the world? or rather ought not ſuch care to be taken by eſtabliſhing the Church of *England*, that it might be impoſſible to make Religion a pretence of Rebellion? and this directly leads me to the next Reaſon againſt our Author's Politicks. *viz.*,

Thirdly, That there is no Religion under Heaven doth better (I might ſay ſo well) ſecure the publick Peace as ours of the Church of *England*. For can any Religion be more peaceable then that which makes reſiſtance to Magiſtrates (in any caſe whatſoever) to be a moſt damnable crime? then that Doctrine that tends to the higheſt perfection of our Humane Natures, that brings our bodies under the ſubjection of our ſouls, and both under ſubjection to God, that exalts our nature from being like the Beaſts that periſh, and makes us partakers of the Divine nature, by rooting out thoſe luſts and vices that cauſe war and ſtrife amongſt us, and by planting in us all thoſe heavenly Graces, that would ſecure the peace

of

of the world, and make us like unto God, and fit to enjoy him to all Eternity; that most conduceth to the good of all Mankind; that establisheth peace, unity, and universal charity amongst all men, that preserves the quiet of Families, the tranquility of our Souls, and the health of our bodies! In sum, can any Religion better promote the peace of our Nation then that which commands every man to do all the good he can to every man, and propoſeth infinite and eternal Rewards to thoſe that obey it; that forbids all manner of evil towards any man under pain of the greateſt, moſt inevitable and eternal torments, and makes not the leaſt allowance for the leaſt of evils either in thought, word, or deed?

Have we not ſeen the peaceable effects of our Church, and her Doctrine in the time of the late miſerable wars amongſt us? For not one true Son of the Church of *England* could ever be forced by the fear of penalties, or ever be allured by the hopes of Reward, to take up Arms againſt his Sovereign. Whereas there is no other ſort of men in *England*, but too many of them were guilty even of actual Rebellion, being led into it even by the very Principles of their Religion.

Why then ſhould this Religion be removed from the minds of men? would it promote peace to take away that which is the grand Foundation of it; and to implant in the room of

of it principles of all kind of ſedition and diſobedience? Would it preſerve his ſacred Majeſty and our Laws, to deſtroy that Church which is their greateſt defence? Is it forgotten already how true our late ſad experience prov'd it, No Church, no King, and no King, no Laws? May not our Church therefore juſtly ſay to thoſe that would deſtroy her (as our Saviour did to thoſe that would have ſton'd him) for which of theſe good works that I have done amongſt you, would you now kill me? This our Politician ſaw well enough, and is forced to confeſs it, in that he ſaith Unity in Religion would produce the ſame effect as that Principle which he propos'd,

But now let us conſider that which is the main Deſign of his Book, which he propoſeth, inſtead of the Church of *England* to maintain peace and quietneſs in our Nation. Which we have, *p.* 79. *viz.*

"That this ſhould be made the main and "general Ground of all Religions that every "man ſhould quietly enjoy his own.

I remember a Fable in *Æſop* to this purpoſe. The Mice were in a grand conſultation how to preſerve themſelves from their mortal Foes the Cats; at length after a long and ſerious Debate, one of them, who (like our Author) thought himſelf a better Politician then all the reſt, very gravely gives them this wiſe advice, That every Cat ſhould wear a Bell about his Neck,

Neck, that ſo they might be warn'd of his coming by the Sound, and might have time to provide for their ſafety. This Advice no doubt was approv'd as very ſafe by all the compa y (as this Gentlemans Propoſal is by all his wiſe Admirers) but at laſt one ſawcy Mouſe ſpoils all with onely asking this Queſtion (as a man might ask our Author) *viz.* How this Advice ſhould be put in Execution? which made them all break up their Council-board with a loud laughter at the folly of their Counſel'our, whoſe great wiſdom they did juſt before ſo much admire.

Againſt our Sir *Pol's* Advice (beſides the impoſſibility of the Propoſal) I may urge the General conſent of all or moſt of the Nations in the whole world. For let him or any man produce if he can, any one Monarchy under Heaven in which the publick exerciſe of every mans particular Religion is allowed him, where there is no ſtanding Army to keep the people in obedience; ſo that it is moſt evident, that in every Nation either a ſtanding Army, or the eſtabliſhment of an Unity in Religion is abſolutely neceſſary for publick Peace and Safety. Now whether it will be thought more convenient for the Peace of *England* to uphold the Church, or to ſubmit to the Long Sword, I refer it to all Engliſh Gentlemen to judge.

If our Author ſhall ſay he means onely the private exerciſe of every man's Religion,

I anſwer, that no Nation nor Church in the whole world allows a greater liberty in the private exerciſe of Religion then we have. For is it not eſtabliſhed by Act of Parliament, that every man ſhall have liberty to exerciſe his own Religion, not only with thoſe of his own family, but with five more ſtrangers? ſo that it is not for Religion, but for the contempt of the Laws, and for endangering by unlawful and numerous aſſemblies the peace and welfare of our nation, that any one is or can be puniſhed by our Laws. This our Politician cannot be ignorant of, and therefore he muſt mean not the private, but the publick exerciſe of every mans Religion.

It may be this Gentleman is an experimental Philoſopher, and is therefore induced to try experiments in Religion and Politicks, as well as in Naturals; though he thereby hazards the ſafety of a whole Nation. I will now (as far as can be) try it with him by granting him what he would have, as to the laſt part of it (for the firſt is altogether impoſſible) and by letting him ſee the conſequence of it, in thoſe Sects amongſt us.

Suppoſe then, that ſome men onely pretend Religion, to gather parties together to ſet up a Common-wealth inſtead of the beſt Form of Government in the whole world, which we now have eſtabliſhed amongſt us; (as it is to be feared moſt of our Phanaticks do, eſpecialſy the

the main leaders and abettors of them;) for though I will not say all dissenters from the Church, are for a Commonwealth in the State, yet this (I believe) our experience and observation may prove true, that all Commonwealths-men are Schismaticks, or at least favourers of Schism and Faction, and great stickelers for a Toleration; and are not these precious Youths (think you) to be tolerated in a Monarchy? and would not it much conduce to the safety of the Monarchy to let them meet by thousands in a company, till they have drawn in all the Common People to their Party? who are too easily seduced with Noise and Action and an appearance of Zeal, joyned with some few wheedling Doctrines that are preached to them; which tend more to make them have an opinion of their own holiness, then to make them really holy, to perswade them that they are Saints, rather then to shew them how they must be so.

Secondly, Suppose others pretend Religion onely to countenance their former Rebellion; is it not very fit that these should be suffered to meet, as often and as many as they please? and yet that there are too many of this sort amongst our Conventiclers, is too probable, in that we see very few others (unless the poor ignorant Women) who are constant Meeters, but such as either were themselves actually engaged in the late Rebellion, or else are very nearly related

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to them that were, or else have lost some unjust or sacrilegious advantage which they had got in the late Times. Now is not his Majesty bound to let these good people have their wills in gratitude to them, for what they did on that Fatal 30th of *January*, never to be thought on without horrour and amazement? Or, Is he not bound to give them back again the Bishops and the Loyal Gentries and Nobilities Lands, which they had sequestred, onely out of pure kindness to them for the good service they have done him?

Thirdly, Suppose others are downright Atheists, and will worship God no ways at all; but make it their business to root out all Religion out of mens minds, and so to dissolve the main bond of Humane Society, (as too many such we have amongst us, and shall soon have more, if our Laws be not executed.) Are these persons to be let alone in the enjoyment of their Atheism? Have I not already proved that they are the most dangerous Enemies to all Government?

Fourthly, Suppose others have a design of setting up some Foreign Power in all Spiritual Causes, and in all Causes that tend in order to Spirituals, (*i.e.* in plain *English* in all Causes that they please) to which the King must submit his Crown, enjoying it onely as in Fee from the Pope; and therefore must be his Holiness's slave and Pack-horse. Is it not very safe for

for the Kings Authority, and for the Peace of the Nation, to tolerate These? and yet these are the two grand Sects of our Nation, *viz.* the *Papists* who subject the King to the Pope, and the *Presbyterians* who make him truckle to the Kirk. Nay, all our Sectaries have already got the distinction in their mouths, That they ought to obey the Kings Authority in Civil matters, but not in Ecclesiastical: So that They onely want a little improvement of that distinction, to make them enlarge Ecclesiastical matters so far as the Papists usually do, and then they shall not need to think themselves obliged to pay the King any obedience at all; onely in such things as they please to call Civil Matters, which I am sure will not be in any thing that thwarts their own humours and interests: for whatsoever does but in the least contradict them, will be thought very Uncivil by them.

For, Suppose others (as the *Scotch* Presbyterians) hold, That every man ought to fight for his Religion, against whoever doth oppose him. Are not those peaceable harmless souls to be tolerated to propagate this so meek and quiet a Doctrine?

Sixthly, Suppose others are Millenaries, and from thence proceed to be *Vennerists*, and think that Christ shall raign a thousand years personally upon the Earth, and that they shall raign with him, and be his Vicegerents, and

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in order thereto, think it is their duty to use Fire and Sword (those excellent Spiritual weapons of their Christian warfare) to kill all men for King Jesus his sake. These surely are very fit to be tolerated in the bloudy exercise of their Religion.

Seventhly; Suppose (to mention no more) that some are *Adamists* and *Levellers*, that think there ought to be no distinction of persons, because none should be higher then themselves; and consequently no order should be observed, nor respect paid to Governours, Nobles, and Gentlemen; & that they pretend to be governed by the Light within them (*i. e.* whatsoever they please to call so, whether their Phantasies or their Passions.) Would not the Publick allowance of all these Sects, and their several practises according to their different Opinions, make a most profound and everlasting Peace in a Nation?

I might instance in many more, but here are enough already, to let our Author see by experiment, the grand folly and madness of his Proposal.

I know he will say, that he supposeth not only that every man should enjoy the quiet exercise of his own Religion; but that his Religion should be this, that every man else as well as himself should have the same liberty.

In answer to this, I would fain know how he can implant this Principle into mens minds?

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or whether it is not much easier to make all Sects comply with the established Religion of the Church of *England*, then to consent in his Principle? for this Principle is as directly contrary to the most (if not to all) the Sects amongst us, as is the Religion of our Church. For there is no Sect but does endeavour to promote its Party and Opinions above all others, and to implant its own Doctrine in the minds of all men with whom they converse. For this must needs be in all persons that do sincerely think their way to be the best to Eternal happiness, (which all men must do that are reasonable, and not apparent Hypocrites) So that the Religion of all men (that have truly any Religion) must oblige them to propagate those Truths which they think necessary, or at least convenient for men to know for their salvation, and to promote that which they think the pure Worship of God, in opposition to all false and superstitious ways of his worship (*i.e.*) in opposition to all other ways but their own.

Wherefore this Gentlemans politick Proposal is just such another, as that of the Politick Mouse in the Fable before mentioned, *viz.* altogether impracticable, if not an absolute contradiction to it self, and an impossibility: nay, herein it is much worse then it, for it is most destructive to those to whom it is given.

For were all men allowed to preach what Doctrines they pleased, the Laws and Govern-

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ment of our Nation could never be maintained or executed, without a constant force and violence: for the minds of men would soon be debauched with such Principles as are inconsistent with all Propriety and Government, and yet Preaching and Hearing must be the least liberty that must be allowed them, according to our Authors sage advice.

But to this I know he will answer, That the Civil Laws should take such care as no man should dare to speak any thing against the established Government of the Nation.

But (I pray you Sir) would it not be much more easie to prevent by the execution of our Laws any such unlawful Meetings, then (when they are met) to hinder them by Law from speaking Treason, or any thing else that they please?

For is it not easie to wire-draw it in by such consequence as their own people shall easily understand what they mean, though no Law can possibly take hold of the expression?

For instance, Suppose in times when Rebellion is prosperous, or at least (when it is hoped there may be such a time) to prepare the people before hand to be Rebels, or to continue them in their Rebellion. It is but telling the People that they are *Gods Dear Ones*, which he will not, nor he cannot forsake, but is bound to fight for them against all their Enemies, and then if they have but a little success, it is but

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preſſing home that peaceable Doctrine of *J. O.* D.D. that to follow Succeſs is to follow Providence, and the People ſhall be ſure to follow you, though you lead them to ſtorm Hell it ſelf, and to take it by violence: and yet what Law can condemn any word of *J. O's* Doctrine?

Again, Suppoſe a man hath a mind to preach Treaſon to his Party, it is but taking that Text in the 149 *Pſalm*, *Let the Saints be joyful in glory*, &c. *Let the high praiſes of God be in their mouth, and a two-edged Sword in their hands, to execute vengeance upon the Heathen, and puniſhment upon the People, to bind their Kings in Chains and their Nobles with links of Iron, to execute upon them the judgment written. This honour have all his Saints.* Now the godly people being before-hand well prepared with that conſtant conceit, that they are Gods Saints (which they are always taught in all Conventicles) they muſt apply all thoſe words to themſelves, and conſequently conclude (as they have done formerly) that the power of binding their Kings in Chains and their Nobles in Links of Iron, and of executing vengeance upon them, &c. belongs abſolutely to every one of them: and therefore that if the Scepter be in the hands of any other perſon (whom they pleaſe to call the Wicked or Unregenerate) that he is but an Uſurper of Dominion over them, and that he holds by force that Scepter and Power which is their right, and by conſequence

that

that (as soon as they can do it) they ought to bind him in Chains, and all his Loyal Nobility in Fetters of Iron, and to execute vengeance upon them: or if they be a little dull of understanding, it is but helping them out, by telling them that God created the Heavens and the Earth, and all things, onely for the sake of the *Saints* and the *Godly Party*, and they will as readily run into all the rest, as an Ass to his Provender, nay, and it fats them as much. And yet it is impossible for any Law to punish a man for any thing that I have supposed him to preach, because there is nothing which he need say to the people to perswade them to Treason, that the Law can interpret to be treasonable.

There are several Texts of Scripture that will do the same feat by the help of their Glosses. As we know *Curse ye Meroz* hath most effectually done it already: and all those Texts where God is said to blame or punish his People for the breach of any Covenant whatsoever, if applied to those persons that ignorantly and superstitiously were drawn in, to take that damnable and accursed Covenant in the late Times, they shall presently think that the most heavy judgments will suddenly fall upon their heads, if they should break the least syllable of that abominable Oath; nay, the most scrupulous of them shall think themselves bound (for fear of the most signal calamities to be inflicted on them by God if they neg-

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left their covenant with him) to be vigorous in acting any thing which that rebellious Oath leads them to. And yet how easily this may be wheadled into such people without ever coming under the lash of the Law, is most visible to any man that hath but common sense.

Another Text of Scripture, which can do them Knights-service, if seasonably exercised upon, is the whole second Psalm: On which, not long since (as I am inform'd) there was a six hours Exercise, at a numerous meeting of all sorts of Phanaticks together, not far from *London*. The occasion of their meeting was a Solemn Fast, appointed by their Leaders, to pray God to avert Persecution from them; only because the King had set out His last Proclamations to put his Laws in Execution. Now if this was not a seasonable Text for their purpose I am mistaken: for if we take this for granted (as they themselves always do) That they are all Gods Saints and his Anointed: how could they interpret this Text but to this purpose, *viz.* That now *the Kings of the Earth*, that is, our King, *and the Rulers* (that is, the Governours of our Nation) *take counsel together, against the Lord, and against his Anointed*, that is, against them and their Conventicles. *He that sitteth in the Heavens shall laugh them to scorn: the Lord shall have them in derision:* that is, according to their glos on that occasion; that though our King and Council do lay their

heads together against them and their meetings, yet God shall make all their designs vain, and a derision; nay, he shall inflict most heavy punishments upon them. For *he shall speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure.* And therefore that our King and our Judges that would execute the Laws upon them do but oppose Christ; wherefore they triumph over them in the words of that *Psalm, Be wise now therefore, O ye Kings; be instructed ye Judges of the Earth, serve the Lord with fear, and rejoyce with trembling;* that is, Serve him by quaking and wrigling in a Conventicle; *Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish*; that is, Submit your Authority to Christ, that is to them that preach Christ in an unlawful Meeting-house, or else be sure ye shall all perish. Now I do not say that they did thus apply this Scripture, but I appeal to any man whether the common people (being before prejudiced with those Opinions that most of the Phanaticks are (hearing these words upon that occasion, might not naturally and almost necessarily run themselves into such an interpretation of them: and judge whether their Teachers had not such a Design, when though they could appoint a Fast, to cry down the execution of our national Laws as persecution; yet never in the least take notice of any Fast upon the 30 of *January*. Are not these think you, Excellent Subjects? And are they

they not very thankfull to the King for his former Indulgence to them?

Other Doctrines there are which no Civil Law can lay hold on; and yet are most pernicious to all Society. As that of a good intention.

For suppose a man tells his people they must look well to their hearts, intentions and meanings; for God requires the heart, and give him but the heart, and they shall be sure to be accepted by him: or in plain English that if we mean well God will see no fault in us. For our well meaning shall even claim pardon for us before God. Now this appears at first sight a very innocent Doctrine: and what Humane Law can take notice of any one word in it? and yet in its direct consequence it excuseth all the villanies and mischiefs in the world.

For may not a man mean well (*i e.* intend his actions to a good end) when he murders his Prince or his Father, or acts any other crime whatsoever?

For a man can scarce propose a better design to himself, then to free a whole Nation from Oppression; He shall therefore (according to this Doctrine) be sure enough of pardon if he murders his Prince, if he does but think him an Oppressor.

Thus he that hath an hard or uncharitable Father, if he does but intend to do more good with his Fathers Estate then he does, may

come at it how he will (though by the murder of his Father) however he is safe enough in his good intentions. It is without doubt a very good design for any man to prevent his Neighbour from running into sin, and hazarding his Soul by it; and therefore (according to this Doctrine) his next Neighbour might even knock him on the head to prevent his continuance in sin; or cheat him of his Estate, to prevent his running into drunkennes and debauchery by it.

Next to this Doctrine of a good meaning, is that of a good Conscience; nay, much of the same kindred with it. For if men be taught that their own Conscience is the sole moderatrix of all their actions, and be not well instructed how to inform their Consciences aright, they necessarily run themselves into all those crimes before mentioned. For suppose that this Doctrine be but preached amongst the People, that he that acts according to his Conscience, is therefore excusable before God (as it is most frequently taught in our unlawful Assemblies) it will thence follow, that whatever Errours they are possessed withall, they may act according to them. So that if a man be but prepossessed with that opinion of a good intention; or of Dominion and Right being founded in grace, or that of *J. O.* that to follow Success is to follow Providence, or a thousand others that might and have been taught

taught them in the late Times, he might act according to his Conſcience, and be guilty of the moſt horrid crimes that ever were committed (even the murder of his Prince or Father not excepted) and yet (according to this Doctrine) be in as hopeful a way of ſalvation as any man in the World.

Next to this (or rather the very ſame) is our Authors Doctrine of every mans governing himſelf by his own Reaſon onely; for he hath hereby made Schiſm, Hereſie, Infidelity, and Atheiſm to be excuſable: and he might as well (if he had pleaſed) have thereby excuſed Adultery, Theft, Murder, or any other crime whatſoever.

For if our own *Humane Reaſon* be prejudiced, and blinded with miſtakes and errours (the Conſcience may be kept inviolable) and yet the man may run into any crimes that can be thought on, and that with the greateſt confidence and aſſurance of his eternal happineſs.

And yet I would faign know of our Politician, what Civil Law can take notice of theſe Doctrines, of every mans being governed by his own Conſcience or his own Reaſon?

Oh! the bleſſed peace and incomparable quiet that would poſſeſs the World, if it was but ſo wiſe to be governed by his Politicks, and would but let every one enjoy his own Religion! that is, if every man that hath itching ears was permitted to heap up Teachers to himſelf according to his own luſts?

What a ſort of old ſilly Fops are the Privy Counſellors and Stateſ-men of all the Nations of the World, to make ſuch a ſtir for an Unity in Religion, when (according to our Sir *Pol.*) a general Toleration of all Religions had much better maintained the Peace of the World? For who then (ſaith he) would quarrel about matters of Religion?

I think I have already proved that every Body would; that is ſincere in the Profeſſion of any Religion whatſoever: for he muſt (if he be true to himſelf in his choice) chooſe that way of Religion which he thinks the neareſt and moſt certain way to happineſs, and conſequently when he hath made that choice, he muſt think himſelf in a better way to happineſs, then any other man that is not of his way, and by the ſame reaſon muſt every one that differs from him think himſelf in a better way then he: and would not this at laſt amount to continued diſputes and quarrels of every man againſt every man? for would not charity oblige me even by force (if no other ways will do it) to compel others into my way, to prevent the imminent danger of their ſouls, which I muſt needs think them in, whileſt they continued in any other way of Religion? this muſt therefore be the natural conſequence of things, if men be ſincere in their Religion. For it cannot be ſaid that every man might be ſaved in his own Religion; For this were to countenance

nance all the crimes in the world, and to prove that men might be saved, though they were guilty of all of them, as well as he that is innocent, since I have prov'd it possible that they might (nay probable that they must) be led into any villanies whatsoever, by their mistakes in Religion: And lastly, this would also undeniably follow from hence, (what our Author hath endeavoured to prove) *viz.* that Jews, Turks, Heathens, and Atheists, are in an equall possibility of salvation with the unerring Christian: and if so, then farewell Christianity.

Wherefore unless our Author could (by this new device of his, of every man's enjoying his own Religion) bring men into the grosseſt hypocrisie or Atheism, he is never the nearer securing the peace of the world from it. For have I not already prov'd, that if men acted according to their different Opinions in Religion (which all that are religious must do,) that they must necessarily be led into such actions as would disturb, if not quite destroy, the Peace of our Nation, or any government in the whole world? I dare challenge our Author to shew me wherein I have fail'd in the proof of it, in those examples I have given of the Sectaries at this present time amongst us.

But it may be he thinks, that if every man was permitted to enjoy his own Religion, this would soon reduce the world into Atheism,

and perhaps he propoſed it to the world for that very end and deſign; truly I am very apt to believe it, and think I have reaſon enough to do ſo: but however the miſchief is, that neither would Atheiſm preſerve but quite deſtroy the publick peace, (as I dare be ſo confident to ſay) I have already undeniably demonſtrated.

What then remains? but that that he doth ingenuouſly acknowledge he was in an errour; and that he was led into it by an over-high conceit of his own parts; methinks it would be a far greater teſtimony of his ingenuity then any he has given, if he would labour ſpeedily to undeceive (as far as he can) his unwary Readers, who have been too much venom'd by his poyſonous and pernicious opinions; by dealing honeſtly and plainly with them, and by explaining himſelf in ſuch ſort, as that we may have no longer juſt reaſon to ſuſpect the whole deſign of his Book was directly intended againſt the Doctrine and Diſcipline of the Church of *England*; and indeed to patronize all irreligion and Atheiſm. This conſideration I refer to the Gentleman's own great humility and good nature: though (I muſt confeſs) I have but little hopes that this advice will have any tolerable effect or influence upon him, ſince he tells us, that it is as great a Martyrdom to acknowledge an errour, as it is to lay down ones life for the Truth; and I am very confident this Author hath no great maw to Martyrdom.

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Wherefore I onely refer it to our Governors, whether it is not neceſſary to make him do it? Since therefore without Religion no Society can be preſerved, and ſince all confuſion would follow all Religions, and that of all the Religions in the whole World, this of our Church of *England* is the moſt peaceable in its Doctrine, and moſt moderate in its Diſcipline, Let all that love the Peace of the Nation joyn in our mutual prayers and endeavours for the Peace and Unity of the Church.

But theſe endeavours are all vain (ſaith our Sir *Pol.*) for both Reaſon and Experience tells us that the hopes of Unity in Religion are impoſſible.

But (I pray you Sir) what Reaſon, what Experience tells us ſo? All the Reaſon that I know of, is onely becauſe your Worſhip would have it ſo. Have we not ſuch Laws, as if they were executed, would eaſily guard our Religion, and prevent Schiſmaticks from making Parties and Factions in our Nation? Did they not do it in Queen *Elizabeths* time, and at the firſt return of his Sacred Majeſty that now reigns? and what ſhould hinder but they might do it now, were there but the ſame true *Engliſh* ſpirits to execute them? Oh! but now the Sectaries are grown too numerous to be ſuppreſſed: But what's the reaſon of their encreaſe amongſt us? was it not becauſe our Laws (by a malevolent juncture of Affairs)

have been lately laid asleep, and were never yet awakened by a due execution of them? Shall we then becauſe they are numerous, let their numbers ſtill encreaſe? they muſt be ſuppreſſed at laſt, or elſe all things muſt run into confuſion: And I onely deſire our *Engliſh* Nobility and Gentry (whoſe duty it is according to their oaths and his Majeſties late Proclamations to ſee them executed) to conſider, that if they will not ſuppreſs them by the execution of the Laws, they will ſoon arrive at that heighth that the Long Sword muſt do it, or elſe there ſhall be no Government at all in our Nation: and when an Army hath once got into pay we know how hard it will be to get rid of it, and how dangerous it will prove to the Liberty and Propriety of the Subject, as well as to the Prerogatives of the Crown. For a ſtanding Army is much like Foreign Aids, which if they are Victors, moſt commonly prove worſe to the Nation that they come to aſſiſt, then the worſt of their Enemies. For they ſoon grow ſo inſolent, that the King himſelf muſt be ſubject to the Favourite Officer amongſt the Souldiers, and wear his Crown no longer then he pleaſeth: and all the Proprieties and Eſtates of the Subjects ſhall be held in a new kind of *tennor in capite*, ſo that they may be diſſeized when our Lords of the Sword pleaſe, and that not by any Law, but onely plain force.

But neither is this true that they are ſo numerous as they ſeem to be, but that they would

would as easily decrease by a brisk execution of our Laws, as they did encrease by their neglect. For the greatest part of our Conventiclers go to Meetings not out of any opinion in Religion, but to carry on some trade, or little interest and design, or to vindicate the reputation of their former rebellious actions, which Reasons would all soon cease if our Laws were vigorously executed.

For if we seriously take a view of our Nation, we shall find that by our divisions, men rather turn Atheists then Phanaticks; and that out of pretence of going to private Meetings, they onely take an occasion to be absent from the publick Congregations, and to spend the Lords day either in sleeping at home, or else in their daily employments in the Field, or in what is worse, in Ale-houses, in drunkenness and debauchery. For I can speak it by my own sad experience, that in a place which hath been an ancient Seat of Divisions ever since the late wars began, where they see no probability that the Laws should be executed against them, a third part at least, if not one half of the Parish are in their practise absolute Atheists, and worship God publickly no where at all.

These are the blessed and inevitable Effects of separation, and of every ones enjoying his own Religion!

I shall say no more concerning the possibility of suppressing Divisions amongst us, but onely propose these few Questions. First,

First, Whether if the Presbyterians were by some expedient comprehension joyned with the Church, the Laws might not easily reclaim the rest?

Secondly, Whether many are not dissenters, because they would pretend Conscience for not paying Tythes? and whether such a Law as should compel them to pay all Tythes and Dues to the Church, would not reclaim many of them, and hinder a great many more from running over to their party?

Thirdly, Whether some better provision for Vicars in great Corporation-towns might not much secure the Unity of the Church, by keeping the Clergy in a capacity to subsist without an absolute dependence upon the people? For hereby they would be encouraged to defend the Church and its Institutions, without fear of starving themselves and their Families: and would be kept from poverty and necessity, which brings a contempt not onely upon their persons but their professions, and by consequence upon Religion it self.

Fourthly, Whether the present and imminent danger of Popery and Atheism, may not be thought a sufficient motive to the Presbyterians to joyn with the Church of *England* upon fair propolals of a reconciliation? And whether it would not be convenient to make this the first Proposal, that they should first agree amongst themselves concerning those things

things in which they would be dispens'd withall?

Fifthly, Whether they that shall persist in a wilful separation after these Endeavours of Reconciliation, shall not as justly deserve to be quite put out of the protection of all the Laws of the Realm as the Clergy did, who would not take the Oath of Supremacy? And whether this would not be the best Expedient to reclaim them without giving our Magistrates the trouble of executing the Laws against them?

Sixthly, Whether the reviving of our Laws against Blasphemy and Atheism, Uncleanness and Debauchery, and profaning the Lords day, would not very much put a stop to the growth of Schism and Faction amongst us?

But our Author answers all these Questions at once; For he tells us, that though they might be compell'd to an outward Uniformity, yet every publick disturbance breaks all those Bonds, and then such compulsions beget and ripen all Disorders.

Is not the same thing always evident in all other Laws whatsoever? Does not every Rebellion break all the Bonds of Humane Society, and make Liberty to be the main pretense to draw in the people? What then shall our Magistrates to prevent this pretense give every man a Liberty at all times to be govern'd by what Laws he pleaseth, and so at once cancel all the Laws of the Nation? Or will they not

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(notwithstanding this fear of begetting or ripening disorders in times of publick disturbance) rather endeavour to preserve the peace at all times (as far as they can) by a due execution of the Laws? Why then should this Reason hold to destroy Religion by letting all men enjoy their own? Are there not ten to one more Rebellions caused out of the pretense of Liberty then of Religion? Or is it expedient that men be left to their Liberty to destroy one anothers Souls by running into Schism, Heresie, Judaism, Infidelity and Atheism, if so be that they be restrained by laws from injuring one another in their Goods and their Bodies? Nay, would not all kind of present injuries to mens persons in a small time (without a Rod of Iron) be the necessary and unavoidable consequence of a toleration of all Religions? Have I not already demonstrated that every mans enjoying his own Religion, would soon bring men either into Atheism or else into mutual and irreconcilable Disputes and Quarrels which would destroy all Government?

He therefore (as his last shift) seems to insinuate that this may be prevented by the manner of establishing this Liberty in a Commonwealth (which he saith would require an entire discourse by it self) when I see that discourse, I shall consider of it, and make no doubt to answer it fully. In the mean time, I shall onely tell him this, That if he can propose such

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a way of an universal Toleration, that shall neither contradict his own Principle of every man enjoying his own Religion, nor require a standing Army to keep the Nation in obedience, *Erit mihi magnus Apollo.* For till I see it done, I must believe it absolutely impossible.

I have more particularly examined all that can appear with any shew of Argument for a general Toleration of all Religions; because I suspect this is our Authors great *Diana*, even the main design of his whole Book; For it is printed in a distinct Character from the rest of his Book, that every man should enjoy his own Religion, as though it was intended that every Reader should take a more particular notice of those words then of any thing else in his whole Book.

His Fourth and last Argument or Defence of his Cause (which he thinks so strong that it needs not the assistance of any other) I must beg his pardon, if I deal plainly with him, and tell him that it is the most senseless and ridiculous consequence that ever I met with in my life, either in his Book or in any other.

The sum of it I shall as near as I can set down in his own words, *viz.*

"It is impossible that ever any man should "have been, is, or hereafter can be guided "by any thing else but his own Reason, as "in all other things, so in matters of Re-"ligion.

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He ſaith it over again, and gives Reaſons for it.

"I ſay impoſſible. For in all belief, and "in all other actions the laſt appeal is "to Reaſon. For I chooſe to believe this "or that Doctrine, or to do this or that "Action, becauſe I have ſome Reaſon "for it.

Now the conſequence he aims at in all this muſt be this or nothing to his purpoſe; therefore every man ought to be left only and wholly to his own Reaſon (as in all other things) ſo in Religion, quietly to enjoy his own.

Now let us but conſider how far men are left to their own Reaſon in all other matters, and it will ſoon appear that our Author hath overthrown his whole Book by this Argument which he thinks ſo impregnable a defence of it.

The inward ſentiments of every mans Reaſon in all Affairs whatſoever (notwithſtanding any Law) are, ever were, and always muſt be free. For nothing is freer then thought. All men are left to their own judgments to think what they will of the Wiſdom or Folly, Juſtice or Injuſtice, Convenience or Inconvenience of thoſe Laws they live under, becauſe it is impoſſible for men to know their thoughts, much more to reſtrain them. And hath not every man the very ſame liberty in matters of Reli-

Religion in the Church of *England* to think what he will of any of her injunctions? So far I suppose we are agreed.

But now as in all other concerns though men have a liberty to think what they please, so long as they keep their thoughts to themselves; yet their words and actions are and must be restrained by laws: because by either of these the Common-wealth might be damnified, and our mutual peace disturb'd. So in all concerns of Religion there is not, nor can be any restraint upon our thoughts, so long as we keep them within our own breast; but if they shew themselves in words or actions contrary to the Laws of the church (because the Unity of the Church and consequently of the State is endangered, and mens eternal salvation hazarded by the propagation of false Religions) therefore penalties are absolutely necessary to restrain mens words and actions in matters of Religion as well as in any other affairs whatsoever.

Lastly, As no further use of reason is or can be allowed to every man in any Common-wealth in those things which are determined by Laws, but onely so far, as to judge whether he can or will obey them, or whether he will suffer the penalties of them: so no other liberty can be allowed in the Church to every man, onely so far, as to judge whether it is most reasonable for him to obey her Canons

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or to ſuffer her Cenſures, and the penalties conſequential upon them: and as no good ſubject or member fit to live in a Commonwealth can think this reſtraint unreaſonable in civil affairs, becauſe the peace of the ſociety does neceſſarily require it: ſo for the ſame reaſon ought no man to think ſuch a reſtraint unreaſonable in religious affairs, becauſe I have already proved that an abſolute liberty in religion would be equally dangerous to the quiet of a Nation, as an abſolute licentiouſneſs or freedom from all laws. Neither is any mans reaſon reſtrained hereby, for he is left to his own free choice (as in all civil laws, ſo in all laws of the Church) to conſult his own reaſon, whether he will obey them, or whether he will venture all the puniſhments of ſoul and body, which may be the conſequence of his contempt and diſobedience, or whether he will quit the place where they are in force and execution.

Wherefore there is no need of any alteration of the preſent State of the Church of *England* by letting every man enjoy his own Religion, to allow him the ſame liberty in Religion as he hath in all other matters.

For as we ſee it evidently in the State, that was every man left free in every thing to be guided by his own Reaſon only (the moſt of men being ſo much blinded as they are with ignorance, paſſion and intereſt, &c. the which they would neceſſarily miſtake for their Reaſon)

ſon) the whole Nation would be turned into a Field of Blood, and an heap of skulls and dead mens bones; and in a ſhort time be rendred more deſolate then the habitations of the fierceſt Beaſts, by the frequent crimes of debauched perſons, was it not for the due execution of wholſom Laws to reſtrain their debauchery: ſo in matters of Religion, if there were no Laws to keep men in due bounds (but every man ſhould be left to be guided onely by himſelf) through the many miſtakes of his own Reaſon (which every man is ſubject to) the whole Nation would ſoon be over-run with our Authors good Clients, Jews, Turks, Heathens, and Atheiſts, and by conſequence, with Bawds, Thieves and Murderers, and all kind of Debauchees and Hectors.

For my part I am not in love with ſuch company, and therefore deſire that men might be held within the due bounds of Law: But if this Gentleman be ſo in love with them, that he would have them encouraged by taking away any Laws that might reſtrain them, I ſhall leave it to our Governours to conſider whether it is reſonable to grant him his requeſt: and whether he hath not well deſerved the publick thanks of the King and Privy Council, and both Houſes of Parliament, for the great pains he hath taken in his Book, and for his moſt ſafe, moſt natural, and moſt peaceable Politick Propoſals he hath made in it, for the re-

reconciling all differences in matters of Religion?

Thus I take my leave of this Author and his Book together; onely adding this one word to him, that I have in no part of my Examination of his Pamphlet, said any thing but what my own Reason dictated to me, and therefore he cannot be angry with me upon his own Principles, because I have guided my self wholly by my own Reason.

And I am sure I shall never be angry with my self for any thing that I have here written, because I know I have writ nothing but what became an honest *Plain-dealing* Country Gentleman.

Wherefore (let the event be what it will) I remain fully satisfied in my own Conscience by having endeavoured to do my Duty, and to shew my self a sincere Lover of Peace, Religion, and the true interest of *England*.

THE END.

Advertiſement to the *Reader* and the *Writer* of *Humane Reaſon.*

I Onely deſire that they would do me juſtice, in fully conſidering every Paragraph of HUMANE REASON *with my particular Examination of it, and in comparing them impartially; and then let them cenſure me how they will, I ſhall not be much concerned at it, but ſhall ſtill remain,*

Their humble Servant

A. M.